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THE WORKS OF

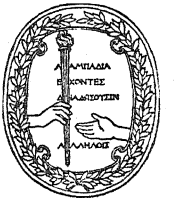
OLIVER GOLDSMITH

EDITED BY

PETER CUNNINGHAM, F.S.A.

ILLUSTRATED

VOL. IV.



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1900

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THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD; OR, LETTERS FROM A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER RESIDING IN LONDON TO HIS FRIENDS IN THE EAST 13

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD;

OR,

LETTERS FROM A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER RESIDING IN LONDON TO HIS FRIENDS IN THE EAST.

London:
Printed for J. Newbery, at the Bible and Sun,
in St. Paul's Church-yard.
MDCCLXII.[1]
[2 vols. 12°.]

[1] Copies of this edition exist with a different title-page to each volume; viz.—

London:
Printed for the Author;
and
Sold by J. Newbery and W. Bristow, in St.
Paul's Church-yard; J. Leake and W. Frederick
at Bath; B. Collins at Salisbury; and A. M. Smart & Co.
at Reading.
MDCCLXXII.

In every other respect the editions are identically the same. The first edition of "The Vicar of Wakefield" was printed in 1766, for B. Collins, at Salisbury.

These letters (one hundred and twenty-three in number) were written for *The Public Ledger*, a London newspaper so called, started by John Newbery, a publisher, bookseller, and seller of medicines, living at the sign of "The Bible and Sun," afterwards known as No. 65, St. Paul's Church-yard. The first number of *The Public Ledger* appeared on the 12th of January, 1760; and the first letter of "The Citizen of the World" on the 24th of the same month.

Goldsmith's remuneration appears to have been at the rate of *a guinea* a Letter (Prior, i. 356).

The celebrated "Turkish Spy," the once celebrated "Persian Tales" ("turned" by Ambrose Philips), De Foe's "Tour through England" (written as a foreigner), and Walpole's Letter "from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi, at Peking," 1757, fol., had prepared the public for the ready reception of the "Chinese Letters." They were at once popular; and between the period of their publication in the columns of a newspaper and the year of Goldsmith's death, 1760–1774, went through three separate editions. The vagaries of Sir William Chambers, the architect (admirably ridiculed by Mason), added to their temporary popularity; but their present reputation rests entirely on their own excellences, independent of any other assistance.

I may add that Goldsmith remembered a quotation from Voltaire made by himself in *The Monthly Review* for August, 1757:—"The success of the 'Persian Letters' arose from the delicacy of their satire. The satire which, in the mouth of an Asiatic, is poignant, would lose all its force when coming from an European."

The text of this reprint has been derived from a collation with the three editions which Goldsmith saw through the press, the third and last appearing in 1774, with this imprint:—"London: printed for T. Carnan and F. Newbery, junior, at Number 65 in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1774." 2 vols., 12°.

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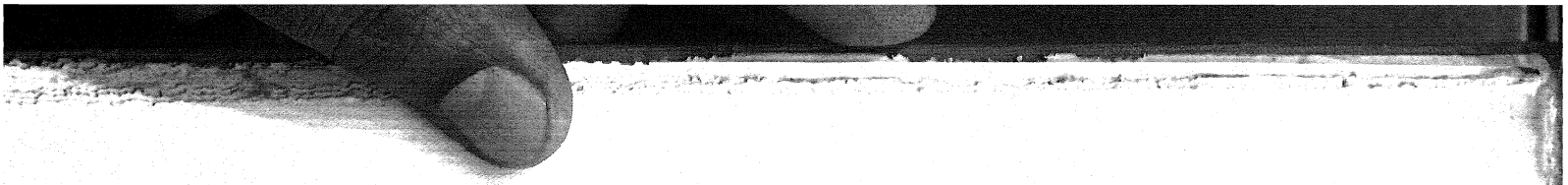
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LETTERS

OF

A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD.

LETTER XLIX.

THE FAIRY TALE CONTINUED.

From the Same.

"Kings," continued I, "at that time were different from what they are now; they then never engaged their word for anything which they did not rigorously intend to perform. This was the case of Bonbenin, who continued all night to lament his misfortunes to the princess who echoed groan for groan. When morning came he published an edict, offering half his kingdom and his princess to the person who should catch and bring him the white mouse with the green eyes.

"The edict was scarcely published when all the traps in the kingdom were baited with cheese: numberless mice were taken and destroyed; but still the much-wished-for mouse was not among the number. The privy-council was assembled more than once to give their advice; but all their deliberations came to nothing; even though there were two complete vermin-killers, and three professed rat-catchers of the number. Frequent addresses, as is usual on extraordinary occasions, were sent from all parts of the empire; but though these promised well, though in them he received an assurance that his faithful subjects would assist in his search with their lives and fortunes, yet, with all their loyalty, they failed when the time came that the mouse was to be caught.

"The prince, therefore, was resolved to go himself in

search, determined never to lie two nights in one place, till he had found what he sought for. Thus, quitting his palace without attendants, he set out upon his journey, and travelled through many a desert, and crossed many a river, high over hills and down long vales, still restless, still inquiring wherever he came; but no white mouse was to be found.

"As one day, fatigued with his journey, he was shading himself from the heat of the mid-day sun, under the arching branches of a banana-tree, meditating on the object of his pursuit, he perceived an old woman, hideously deformed, approaching him; by her stoop, and the wrinkles of her visage, she seemed at least five hundred years old; and the spotted toad was not more freckled than was her skin. 'Ah! Prince Bonbenin-bonbobbin-bonbobbinet,' cried the creature, 'what has led you so many thousand miles from your own kingdom? what is it you look for, and what induces you to travel into the kingdom of Emmets?' The prince, who was excessively complaisant, told her the whole story three times over; for she was hard of hearing. 'Well,' says the old fairy, for such she was, 'I promise to put you in possession of the white mouse with green eyes, and that immediately too, upon one condition.' 'One condition!' cried the prince, in a rapture, 'name a thousand; I shall undergo them all with pleasure.' 'Nay,' interrupted the old fairy, 'I ask but one, and that not very mortifying neither; it is only that you instantly consent to marry me.'

"It is impossible to express the prince's confusion at this demand; he loved the mouse, but he detested the bride: he hesitated; he desired time to think upon the proposal; he would have been glad to consult his friends upon such an occasion. 'Nay, nay,' cried the odious fairy, 'if you demur, I retract my promise; I do not desire to force my favors on any man. Here, you my attendants,' cried she, stamping with her foot, 'let my machine be driven up. Barbacela, Queen of Emmets, is not used to contemptuous treatment.' She had no sooner spoken than her fiery chariot appeared in the air, drawn by two snails; and she was just going to step in, when the prince reflected that now or never was the time

to be possessed of the white mouse; and, quite forgetting his lawful princess Nanhoa, falling on his knees, he implored forgiveness for having rashly rejected so much beauty. This well-timed compliment instantly appeased the angry fairy. She affected a hideous leer of approbation, and, taking the young prince by the hand, conducted him to a neighboring church, where they were married together in a moment. As soon as the ceremony was performed the prince, who was to the last degree desirous of seeing his favorite mouse, reminded the bride of her promise. 'To confess a truth, my prince,' cried she, 'I myself am that very white mouse you saw on your wedding night in the royal apartment. I now, therefore, give you the choice whether you would have me a mouse by day and a woman by night, or a mouse by night and a woman by day.' Though the prince was an excellent casuist he was quite at a loss how to determine, but at last thought it most prudent to have recourse to a blue cat that had followed him from his own dominions, and frequently amused him with its conversation, and assisted him with its advice; in fact, this cat was no other than the faithful princess Nanhoa herself, who had shared with him all his hardships in this disguise.

"By her instructions he was determined in his choice, and returning to the old fairy, prudently observed, that as she must have been sensible he had married her only for the sake of what she had, and not for her personal qualifications, he thought it would for several reasons be most convenient if she continued a woman by day and appeared a mouse by night.

"The old fairy was a good deal mortified at her husband's want of gallantry, though she was reluctantly obliged to comply: the day was therefore spent in the most polite amusements—the gentlemen talked smut, the ladies laughed and were angry. At last the happy night drew near; the blue cat still stuck by the side of its master, and even followed him to the bridal apartment. Barbacela entered the chamber, wearing a train fifteen yards long, supported by porcupines, and all over beset with jewels, which served to render her more detestable. She was just stepping into bed to the

getting her promise, when he insisted upon seeing her in the shape of a mouse. She had promised, and no fairy can break her word; wherefore, assuming the figure of the most beautiful mouse in the world, she skipped and played about with an infinity of amusement. The prince, in an agony of rapture, was desirous of seeing his pretty playfellow move a slow dance about the floor to his own singing; he began to sing, and the mouse immediately to perform with the most perfect knowledge of time, and the finest grace and greatest gravity imaginable. It only began, for Nanhoa, who had long waited for the opportunity in the shape of a cat, flew upon it instantly without remorse, and eating it up in the hundredth part of a moment, broke the charm, and then resumed her natural figure.

"The prince now found that he had all along been under the power of enchantment, that his passion for the white mouse was entirely fictitious, and not the genuine complexion of his soul; he now saw that his earnestness after mice was an illiberal amusement, and much more becoming a rat-catcher than a prince. All his meannesses now stared him in the face; he begged the discreet princess's pardon a hundred times. The princess very readily forgave him; and, both returning to their palace in Bonbobbin, lived very happily together, and reigned many years with all that wisdom which, by the story, they appear to have been possessed of; perfectly convinced by their former adventures that they who place their affections on trifles at first for amusement will find those trifles at last become their most serious concern." Adieu.

LETTER L.

AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE WHAT IS MEANT BY ENGLISH LIBERTY.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

Ask an Englishman what nation in the world enjoys most freedom, and he immediately answers his own. Ask him in what that freedom principally consists, and he is instantly

silent. This happy pre-eminence does not arise from the people's enjoying a larger share in legislation than elsewhere; for in this particular several states in Europe excel them; nor does it arise from a greater exemption from taxes, for few countries pay more; it does not proceed from their being restrained by fewer laws, for no people are burdened with so many; nor does it particularly consist in the security of their property, for property is pretty well secured in every polite state of Europe.

How then are the English more free—for more free they certainly are — than the people of any other country, or under any other form of government whatever? Their freedom consists in their enjoying all the advantages of democracy, with this superior prerogative borrowed from monarchy, that the severity of their laws may be relaxed without endangering the constitution.

In a monarchical state, in which the constitution is strongest, the laws may be relaxed without danger; for though the people should be unanimous in the breach of any one in particular, yet still there is an effective power superior to the people, capable of enforcing obedience, whenever it may be proper to inculcate the law either towards the support or welfare of the community.

But in all those governments, where laws derive their sanction from the people alone, transgressions cannot be overlooked without bringing the constitution into danger. They who transgress the law in such a case are those who prescribe it, by which means it loses not only its influence but its sanction. In every republic the laws must be strong, because the constitution is feeble; they must resemble an Asiatic husband, who is justly jealous, because he knows himself impotent. Thus, in Holland, Switzerland, and Genoa new laws are not frequently enacted, but the old ones are observed with unremitting severity. In such republics, therefore, the people are slaves to laws of their own making little less than in unmixed monarchies, where they are slaves to the will of one, subject to frailties like themselves.

In England, from a variety of happy accidents, their con-

stitution is just strong enough, or, if you will, monarchical enough, to permit a relaxation of the severity of laws, and yet those laws still to remain sufficiently strong to govern the people. This is the most perfect state of civil liberty of which we can form any idea; here we see a greater number of laws than in any other country, while the people at the same time obey only such as are immediately conducive to the interests of society; several are unnoticed, many unknown; some kept to be revived and enforced upon proper occasions, others left to grow obsolete, even without the necessity of abrogation.

There is scarce an Englishman who does not almost every day of his life offend with impunity against some express law, and for which, in a certain conjuncture of circumstances, he would not receive punishment. Gaming-houses, preaching at prohibited places, assembled crowds, nocturnal amusements, public shows, and a hundred other instances are forbidden, and frequented. These prohibitions are useful; though it be prudent in their magistrates, and happy for the people, that they are not enforced, and none but the venal or mercenary attempt to enforce them.

The law in this case, like an indulgent parent, still keeps the rod, though the child is seldom corrected. Were those pardoned offences to rise into enormity, were they likely to obstruct the happiness of society, or endanger the state, it is then that Justice would resume her terrors, and punish those faults she had so often overlooked with indulgence. It is to this ductility of the laws that an Englishman owes the freedom he enjoys superior to others in a more popular government: every step, therefore, the constitution takes towards a democratic form, every diminution of the legal authority, is, in fact, a diminution of the subject's freedom; but every attempt to render the government more popular not only impairs natural liberty, but even will at last dissolve the political constitution.

Every popular government seems calculated to last only for a time; it grows rigid with age, new laws are multiplying, and the old continue in force; the subjects are op-

pressed, burdened with a multiplicity of legal injunctions; there are none from whom to expect redress, and nothing but a strong convulsion in the state can vindicate them into former liberty: thus, the people of Rome, a few great ones excepted, found more real freedom under their emperors, though tyrants, than they had experienced in the old age of the commonwealth, in which their laws were become numerous and painful, in which new laws were every day enacting, and the old ones executed with rigor. They even refused to be reinstated in their former prerogatives, upon an offer made them to this purpose; for they actually found emperors the only means of softening the rigors of their constitution.

The constitution of England is at present possessed of the strength of its native oak and the flexibility of the bending tamarisk; but should the people at any time, with a mistaken zeal, pant after an imaginary freedom, and fancy that abridging monarchy was increasing their privileges, they would be very much mistaken, since every jewel plucked from the crown of majesty would only be made use of as a bribe to corruption; it might enrich the few who shared it among them, but would in fact impoverish the public.

As the Roman senators, by slow and imperceptible degrees, became masters of the people, yet still flattered them with a show of freedom, while themselves only were free,[1] so is it possible for a body of men, while they stand up for privileges, to grow into an exuberance of power themselves, and the public become actually dependent, while some of its individuals only governed.

If then, my friend, there should in this country ever be on the throne a king who, through good-nature or age, should give up the smallest part of his prerogative to the people; if there should come a minister of merit and popularity—But I have room for no more. Adieu.

[1] "But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own;
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free," etc.—*The Traveller.*

LETTER LI.

A BOOKSELLER'S VISIT TO THE CHINESE.

To the Same.

As I was yesterday seated at breakfast over a pensive dish of tea my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger, dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit—begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect and the warmth of his curiosity.

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge whether he had lately published anything new. I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

"Excuse me, sir," says he, "it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer than I would sell pork in the dog-days. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a sessions paper may amuse a summer reader; but all our stock of value we reserve for a spring and winter trade." "I must confess, sir," says I, "a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal." "Sir," replied the bookseller, "it is not my way to cry up my own goods; but, without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade. My books at least have the peculiar advantage of being always new; and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar, but that is not my way; I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamor arises, I always echo the

million. For instance, should the people in general say that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own reflected." "But, sir," interrupted I, "you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you publish; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world?" "As to that, sir," replied the talkative bookseller, "I only draw out the plans myself; and though I am very cautious of communicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favor to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, sir—here they are, diamonds of the first water, I assure you. *Imprimis*, a translation of several medical precepts, for the use of such physicians as do not understand Latin. *Item*, the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manner of smiling without distorting the face. *Item*, the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of 'Change Alley. *Item*, the proper manner of cutting black-lead pencils and making crayons, by the Right Hon. the Earl of ——. *Item*, the muster-master-general, or the review of reviews—" "Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "my curiosity with regard to title-pages is satisfied; I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history, or an epic poem." "Bless me!" cries the man of industry, "now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humor. Strokes, sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line." "Do you call these dashes of the pen strokes," replied I, "for I must confess I can see no other?" "And pray, sir," returned he, "what do you call them? Do you see anything good nowadays that is not filled with strokes—and dashes? Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humor.[1] I bought last season a piece that had

[1] "A prologue, interdash'd with many a stroke—
An art contriv'd to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between."—COWPER.

no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha-ha's,[1] three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a firework." "I fancy, then, sir, you were a considerable gainer?" "It must be owned the piece did pay; but, upon the whole, I cannot much boast of last winter's success; I gained by two murders, but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my 'Direct Road to an Estate,' but the 'Infernal Guide' brought me up again. Ah, sir, that was a piece touched off by the hand of a master, filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view; no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humor; he wisely considered that moral and humor at the same time were quite overdoing the business." "To what purpose was the book, then, published?" cried I. "Sir, the book was published in order to be sold; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it, which came out soon after: of all kinds of writings that goes off best at present; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

"I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics; close was the word, always very right, and very dull—ever on the safe side of an argument; yet, with all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favor. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him at the beginning of every month as a censor on the works of others. In short, I found him a treasure; no merit could escape him; but what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk." "But are there not some works," interrupted I, "that from the very manner of their composition must be exempt from criticism, particularly such as profess to disregard its laws?" "There is no work

[1] Alluding, as I see reason to believe, to Townley's farce of "High Life Below Stairs," in which the *ha-ha's* are indeed numerous enough. Goldsmith had already referred to this popular farce in No. 5 of *The Bee:* "A word or two on the late farce called 'High Life Below Stairs.'" See Vol. V.

whatsoever but he can criticise," replied the bookseller; "even though you wrote in Chinese he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese Letters, for instance; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come—should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of Eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple and perfectly natural—he has then the strongest reason to exclaim. He may, with a sneer, send you back to China for readers. He may observe that, after the first or second letter, the iteration of the same simplicity is insupportably tedious; but the worst of all is, the public in such a case will anticipate his censures, and leave you with all your instructive simplicity to be mauled at discretion."

"Yes," cried I, "but in order to avoid his indignation, and what I should fear more, that of the public, I would in such a case write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had; nor would I appear more stupid than nature made me." "Here, then," cries the bookseller, "we should have you entirely in our power; unnatural, uneastern, quite out of character, erroneously sensible, would be the whole cry; sir, we should then hunt you down like a rat."[1] "Head of my father!" said I, "sure there are but two ways: the door must either be shut or it must be open. I must either be natural or unnatural." "Be what you will, we shall criticise you," returned the bookseller, "and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, sir, it is time that I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China; and if you will but put your name to it as the author I shall repay the obligation with gratitude." "What, sir," replied I, "put my name to a work which I have not written! Never,

[1] Introduced as an indirect mode of reply to occasional objectors in the newspapers, that the character of a Chinese was not sufficiently preserved—that the letter-writer was too observant or too well-informed upon English matters for the country to which he assumed to belong.

while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself." The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardor of the bookseller's conversation; and, after about half an hour's disagreeable reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave and withdrew. Adieu.[1]

LETTER LII.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DISTINGUISHING MEN IN ENGLAND BY THEIR DRESS.—TWO INSTANCES OF THIS.

To the Same:

In all other countries, my dear Fum Hoam, the rich are distinguished by their dress. In Persia, China, and most parts of Europe, those who are possessed of much gold or silver put some of it upon their clothes; but in England those who carry much upon their clothes are remarked for having but little in their pockets. A tawdry outside is regarded as a badge of poverty; and those who can sit at home and gloat over their thousands in silent satisfaction are generally found to do it in plain clothes.

This diversity of thinking from the rest of the world which prevails here I was first at a loss to account for; but am since informed that it was introduced by an intercourse between them and their neighbors, the French; who, whenever they came in order to pay those islanders a visit, were generally very well dressed and very poor—daubed with lace, but all the gilding on the outside. By this means laced clothes have been brought so much into contempt that at present even their mandarins are ashamed of finery.

I must own myself a convert to English simplicity. I am no more for ostentation of wealth than of learning; the person who in company should pretend to be wiser than others I am apt to regard as illiterate and ill-bred; the person whose

[1] This admirable letter is built on Pope's still more admirable description of his ride to Oxford in company with Lintot, the bookseller. Lintot, in an unpublished letter to Broome, the poet, now before me, calls it a *merry* letter.

clothes are extremely fine I am too apt to consider as not being possessed of any superiority of fortune, but resembling those Indians who are found to wear all the gold they have in the world in a bob at the nose.

I was lately introduced into a company of the best-dressed men I have seen since my arrival. Upon entering the room I was struck with awe at the grandeur of the different dresses. "That personage," thought I, "in blue and gold must be some emperor's son; that in green and silver a prince of the blood; he in embroidered scarlet a prime-minister—all first-rate noblemen, I suppose, and well-looking noblemen too." I sat for some time, with that uneasiness which conscious inferiority produces in the ingenuous mind, all attention to their discourse. However, I found their conversation more vulgar than I could have expected from personages of such distinction. "If these," thought I to myself, "be princes, they are the most stupid princes I have ever conversed with;" yet still I continued to venerate their dress; for dress has a kind of mechanical influence on the mind.

My friend in black, indeed, did not behave with the same deference, but contradicted the finest of them all in the most peremptory tones of contempt. But I had scarcely time to wonder at the imprudence of his conduct, when I found occasion to be equally surprised at the absurdity of theirs; for upon the entry of a middle-aged man, dressed in a cap, dirty shirt, and boots, the whole circle seemed diminished of their former importance, and contended who should be first to pay their obeisance to the stranger. They somewhat resembled a circle of Calmucks offering incense to a bear.

Eager to know the cause of so much seeming contradiction, I whispered my friend out of the room, and found that the august company consisted of no other than a dancing-master, two fiddlers, and a third-rate actor, all assembled in order to make a set at country-dances—as the middle-aged gentleman whom I saw enter was a squire from the country, and desirous of learning the new manner of footing, and smoothing up the rudiments of his rural minuet.

I was no longer surprised at the authority which my friend

assumed among them; nay, was even displeased (pardon my Eastern education) that he had not kicked every creature of them down-stairs. "What!" said I, "shall a set of such paltry fellows dress themselves up like sons of kings, and claim even the transitory respect of half an hour? There should be some law to restrain so manifest a breach of privilege; they should go from house to house, as in China, with the instruments of their profession strung round their necks; by this means we might be able to distinguish and treat them in a style of becoming contempt." "Hold, my friend," replied my companion, "were your reformation to take place, as dancing-masters and fiddlers now mimic gentlemen in appearance, we should then find our fine gentlemen conforming to theirs. A beau might be introduced to a lady of fashion with a fiddle-case hanging at his neck by a red ribbon, and, instead of a cane, might carry a fiddle-stick. Though to be as dull as a first-rate dancing-master might be used with proverbial justice; yet, dull as he is, many a fine gentleman sets him up as the proper standard of politeness; copies not only the pert vivacity of his air, but the flat insipidity of his conversation. In short, if you make a law against dancing-masters imitating the fine gentleman, you should with as much reason enact that no fine gentleman shall imitate the dancing-master."

After I had left my friend I made toward home, reflecting as I went upon the difficulty of distinguishing men by their appearance. Invited, however, by the freshness of the evening, I did not return directly, but went to ruminate on what had passed in a public garden belonging to the city. Here, as I sat upon one of the benches, and felt the pleasing sympathy which nature in bloom inspires, a disconsolate figure, who sat on the other end of the seat, seemed no way to enjoy the serenity of the season. His dress was miserable beyond description: a threadbare coat of the rudest materials; a shirt, though clean, yet extremely coarse; hair that seemed to have been long unconscious of the comb; and all the rest of his equipage impressed with the marks of genuine poverty.

As he continued to sigh, and testify every symptom of despair, I was naturally led, from a motive of humanity, to

offer comfort and assistance. You know my heart, and that all who are miserable may claim a place there. The pensive stranger at first declined my conversation; but at last, perceiving a peculiarity in my accent and manner of thinking, he began to unfold himself by degrees.

I now found that he was not so very miserable as he at first appeared: upon my offering him a small piece of money he refused my favor, yet without appearing displeased at my intended generosity. It is true he sometimes interrupted the conversation with a sigh, and talked pathetically of neglected merit; yet still I could perceive a benignity in his countenance that, upon a closer inspection, bespoke inward content.

Upon a pause in the conversation I was going to take my leave, when he begged I would favor him with my company home to supper. I was surprised at such a demand from a person of his appearance; but willing to indulge curiosity, I accepted his invitation, and, though I felt some repugnance at being seen with one who appeared so very wretched, went along with seeming alacrity.

Still, as he approached nearer home his good-humor proportionably seemed to increase. At last he stopped, not at the gate of a hovel, but of a magnificent palace! When I cast my eyes upon all the sumptuous elegance which everywhere presented upon entering, and then when I looked at my seemingly miserable conductor, I could scarcely think that all this finery belonged to him; yet in fact it did. Numerous servants ran through the apartments with silent assiduity; several ladies of beauty, and magnificently dressed, came to welcome his return; a most elegant supper was provided: in short, I found the person, whom a little before I had sincerely pitied, to be in reality a most refined epicure—one who courted contempt abroad, in order to feel with keener gust the pleasures of pre-eminence at home. Adieu.

LETTER LIII.

THE ABSURD TASTE FOR OBSCENE AND PERT NOVELS, SUCH AS "TRISTRAM SHANDY," RIDICULED.[1]

From the Same.

How often have we admired the eloquence of Europe! that strength of thinking, that delicacy of imagination, even beyond the efforts of the Chinese themselves. How were we enraptured with those bold figures which sent every sentiment with force to the heart! How have we spent whole days together in learning those arts by which European writers got within the passions, and led the reader as if by enchantment!

But though we have learned most of the rhetorical figures of the last age, yet there seems to be one or two of great use here which have not yet travelled to China. The figures I mean are called bawdy and pertness: none are more fashionable; none so sure of admirers; they are of such a nature that the merest blockhead, by a proper use of them, shall have the reputation of a wit; they lie level to the meanest capacities, and address those passions which all have, or would be ashamed to disown.

It has been observed, and I believe with some truth, that it is very difficult for a dunce to obtain the reputation of a wit;

[1] "Until 1759, Sterne had only printed two sermons; but in this year he surprised the world by publishing the first and second volumes of 'Tristram Shandy.' He went to London to enjoy his fame, and met with all that attention which the public gives to men of notoriety. He boasts of being engaged fourteen dinners deep, and received this hospitality as a tribute; while his contemporaries saw the festivity in a very different light. 'Any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing,' said Johnson, 'will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I am told, has had engagements for three months.' Johnson's feelings of morality, and respect for the priesthood, led him to speak of Sterne with contempt; but when Goldsmith added, 'And a very dull fellow,' he replied with his emphatic 'Why, no, sir.'"—Sir Walter Scott, *Prose Works*, vol. iii. p. 282.

Sterne

yet, by the assistance of the figure bawdy, this may be easily effected, and a bawdy blockhead often passes for a fellow of smart parts and pretensions. Every object in nature helps the jokes forward, without scarce any effort of the imagination. If a lady stands, something very good may be said upon that; if she happens to fall, with the help of a little fashionable pruriency, there are forty sly things ready on the occasion. But a prurient jest has always been found to give most pleasure to a few very old gentlemen, who, being in some measure dead to other sensations, feel the force of the allusion with double violence on the organs of risibility.

An author who writes in this manner is generally sure, therefore, of having the very old and the impotent among his admirers; for these he may properly be said to write, and from these he ought to expect his reward; his works being often a very proper succedaneum to cantharides, or an assafœtida pill. His pen should be considered in the same light as the squirt of an apothecary, both being directed at the same generous end.

But though this manner of writing be perfectly adapted to the taste of gentlemen and ladies of fashion here, yet still it deserves greater praise in being equally suited to the most vulgar apprehensions. The very ladies and gentlemen of Benin or Caffraria are in this respect tolerably polite, and might relish a prurient joke of this kind with critical propriety; probably, too, with higher gust, as they wear neither breeches nor petticoats to intercept the application.

It is certain I never could have expected the ladies here, biassed as they are by education, capable at once of bravely throwing off their prejudices, and not only applauding books in which this figure makes the only merit, but even adopting it in their own conversation. Yet so it is; the pretty innocents now carry those books openly in their hands which formerly were hid under the cushion; they now lisp their double meanings with so much grace, and talk over the raptures they bestow with such little reserve, that I am sometimes reminded of a custom among the entertainers in China, who think it a piece of necessary breeding to whet the appetites of their

downright obscenity will suffice. By speaking to some peculiar sensations we are always sure of exciting laughter, for the jest does not lie in the writer, but in the subject.

But bawdy is often helped on by another figure, called pertness; and few indeed are found to excel in one that are not possessed of the other. As in common conversation the best way to make the audience laugh is by first laughing yourself, so in writing the properest manner is to show an attempt at humor, which will pass upon most for humor in reality. To effect this, readers must be treated with the most perfect familiarity: in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next to pull them by the nose; he must talk in riddles, and then send them to bed in order to dream for the solution. He must speak of himself, and his chapters, and his manner, and what he would be at, and his own importance, and his mother's importance, with the most unpitying prolixity; now and then testifying his contempt for all but himself, smiling without a jest, and without wit professing vivacity. Adieu.

LETTER LIV.

THE CHARACTER OF AN IMPORTANT TRIFLER.[1]

From the Same.

THOUGH naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive, I am often found in the centre of a crowd; and wherever pleasure is to be sold am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward, work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard is qualified for stronger

[1] Reprinted by Goldsmith, in 1765, as Essay X.

flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigor.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed: we now turned to the right, then to the left; as we went forward he still went faster, but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. "My dear Drybone,"[1] cries he, shaking my friend's hand, "where have you been hiding this half a century? Positively I had fancied you were gone down to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country." During the reply I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion: his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt, and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress, that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes and the bloom in his countenance. "Pshaw, pshaw, Will,"[2] cried the figure, "no more of that if you love me: you know I hate flattery, on my soul

[1] *My dear Charles*, when reprinted, in 1765, as Essay X.

[2] *Charles*, when reprinted, in 1765, as Essay X.

I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do: but there are a great many damned honest fellows among them; and we must not quarrel with one half because the other wants breeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. 'Ned,' says he to me—'Ned,' says he, 'I'll hold gold to silver I can tell where you were poaching last night.' 'Poaching, my lord,' says I; 'faith, you have missed already; for I stayed at home, and let the girls poach for me. That's my way; I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey—stand still, and, swoop, they fall into my mouth.'"

"Ah, Tibbs, thou art a happy fellow," cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity; "I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company?" "Improved," replied the other; "you shall know—but let it go no farther—a great secret—five hundred a year to begin with. My lord's word of honor for it—his lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a *tête-à-tête* dinner in the country, where we talked of nothing else." "I fancy you forget, sir," cried I, "you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town." "Did I say so?" replied he, coolly; "to be sure, if I said so, it was so—dined in town: egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town; but I dined in the country, too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By-the-bye, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that: we were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's, an affected piece, but let it go no farther; a secret: well, there happened to be no assafœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which[1] says I, 'I'll hold a thousand guineas, and say done first, that—' But, dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half a crown for

[1] The words *there happened to be no assafœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which*, were omitted when the paper was reprinted, in 1765, as Essay X.

a minute or two or so, just till—but, harkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you."

When he left us our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. "His very dress," cries my friend, "is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day you will find him in rags, if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction, of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarce a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor, and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct he may thus earn a precarious subsistence, but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience.[1] Adieu.

LETTER LV.

HIS CHARACTER CONTINUED; WITH THAT OF HIS WIFE, HIS HOUSE, AND FURNITURE.[2]

To the Same.

I AM apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be[3] no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and

[1] *Duty*, Essay X., 1765. [2] Reprinted by its author in 1765, as Essay XI.

[3] Altered in 1765 to *There are some acquaintances whom it is*, when reprinted as Essay XI.

slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be a harmless, amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him[1] by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Blast me," cries he, with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the park so thin in my life before! there's no company at all to-day; not a single face to be seen." "No company!" interrupted I, peevishly; "no company where there is such a crowd? why man, there's too much. What are the thousand that have been laughing at us but company?" "Lord, my dear," returned he, with the utmost good-humor, "you seem immensely chagrined; but, blast me, when the world laughs at me I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash the Creolian, and I sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to-day; I must insist on't: I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred—but that's between ourselves—under the inspection of the Countess of All-night.[2] A charming body of voice; but

[1] Altered in 1765 to *as well as he*, Essay XI. [2] *Shoreditch*, Essay XI.

no more of that; she shall give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature! I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that's in friendship—let it go no farther: she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I'll make her a scholar; I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open; and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded whether I delighted in prospects; to which, answering in the affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming in the world, out of my windows; we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip-top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one; but, as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may come to see me the oftener."

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, who's there? My conductor answered that it was him. But this was not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand: to which he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman[1] with cautious reluctance.

[1] *Maid-servant*, Essay XI.

When we were got in he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and, turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady? "Good troth," replied she, in a peculiar dialect, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer." "My two shirts!" cries he, in a tone that faltered with confusion, "what does the idiot mean?" "I ken what I mean weel enough," replied the other; "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because—" "Fire and fury! no more of thy stupid explanations!" cried he; "go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag to be forever in my family she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a Parliament man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs's arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned; a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess and a mandarin without a head were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed pictures, which, he observed, were all his own drawing. "What do you think, sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? there's the true keeping in it; it's my own face, and though there happens to be no likeness, a countess offered me a hundred for its fellow: I refused her, for, hang it, that would be mechanical, you know."

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such an odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed out all night at the Gardens[1] with the countess, who

[1] *Vauxhall Gardens*, Essay XI.

was excessively fond of the horns. "And indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his lordship drank your health in a bumper." "Poor Jack," cries he, "a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me: but I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither—there are but three of us; something elegant, and little will do; a turbot, an ortolan, or a—" "Or what do you think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?" "The very thing," replies he; "it will eat best with some smart bottled beer; but be sure to let's have the sauce his grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat; that is country all over; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase: the company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy; I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mr. Tibbs assuring me that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

LETTER LVI.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE SEVERAL STATES OF EUROPE.

From Fum Hoam to Altangi, the discontented Wanderer.

THE distant sounds of music, that catch new sweetness as they vibrate through the long-drawn valley, are not more pleasing to the ear than the tidings of a far-distant friend. I have just received two hundred of thy letters by the Russian caravan, descriptive of the manners of Europe. You have left it to geographers to determine the site of their mountains and extent of their lakes, seeming only employed in discovering the genius, the government, and disposition of the people.

In those letters I perceive a journal of the operations of your mind upon whatever occurs, rather than a detail of your travels from one building to another; of your taking a draught of this ruin or that obelisk; of paying so many tomans for this commodity, or laying up a proper store for the passage of some new wilderness.

From your accounts of Russia I learn that this nation is again relaxing into pristine barbarity; that its great emperor wanted a life of a hundred years more to bring about his vast design. A savage people may be resembled to their own forests: a few years are sufficient to clear away the obstructions to agriculture; but it requires many ere the ground acquires a proper degree of fertility. The Russians, attached to their ancient prejudices, again renew their hatred to strangers, and indulge every former brutal excess. So true it is that the revolutions of wisdom are slow and difficult, the revolutions of folly or ambition precipitate and easy. "We are not to be astonished," says Confucius, "that the wise walk more slowly in their road to virtue than fools in their passage to vice, since passion drags us along, while wisdom only points out the way."[1]

The German Empire, that remnant of the majesty of ancient Rome, appears, from your accounts, on the eve of dissolution. The members of its vast body want every tie of government to unite them, and seem feebly held together only by their respect for ancient institutions. The very name of country and countrymen, which in other nations makes one of the strongest bonds of government, has been here for some time laid aside—each of its inhabitants seeming more proud of being called from the petty state which gives him birth than by the more well-known title of German.

This government may be regarded in the light of a severe master and a feeble opponent. The states which are now subject to the laws of the empire are only watching a proper occasion to fling off the yoke, and those which are become too

[1] Though this fine maxim be not found in the Latin edition of the morals of Confucius, yet we find it ascribed to him by Le Comte, "Etat présent de la Chine," vol. i. p. 348.—GOLDSMITH.

powerful to be compelled to obedience now begin to think of dictating in their turn. The struggles in this state are, therefore, not in order to preserve but to destroy the ancient constitution: if one side succeeds, the government must become despotic; if the other, several states will subsist without even nominal subordination; but, in either case, the Germanic constitution will be no more.

Sweden, on the contrary, though now seemingly a strenuous assertor of its liberties, is probably only hastening on to despotism. Their senators, while they pretend to vindicate the freedom of the people, are only establishing their own independence. The deluded people will, however, at last perceive the miseries of an aristocratical government; they will perceive that the administration of a society of men is ever more painful than that of one only. They will fly from this most oppressive of all forms, where one single member is capable of controlling the whole, to take refuge under the throne, which will ever be attentive to their complaints. No people long endure an aristocratical government when they can apply elsewhere for redress. The lower orders of people may be enslaved for a time by a number of tyrants, but upon the first opportunity they will ever take a refuge in despotism or democracy.

As the Swedes are making concealed approaches to despotism, the French, on the other hand, are imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom. When I consider that those parliaments (the members of which are all created by the court, the presidents of which can act only by immediate direction) presume even to mention privileges and freedom, who, till of late, received directions from the throne with implicit humility; when this is considered, I cannot help fancying that the genius of freedom has entered that kingdom in disguise. If they have but three weak monarchs more successively on the throne, the mask will be laid aside, and the country will certainly once more be free.

When I compare the figure which the Dutch make in Europe with that they assume in Asia, I am struck with surprise. In Asia I find them the great lords of all the Indian seas; in

but to take a pen, ink, and paper and write away through three large volumes, and then sign his name to the title-page; though the whole might have been before more disgusting than his own rent-roll, yet signing his name and title gives value to the deed; title being alone equivalent to taste, imagination, and genius.[1]

As soon as a piece, therefore, is published, the first questions are, "Who is the author? does he keep a coach? where lies his estate? what sort of a table does he keep?" If he happens to be poor and unqualified for such a scrutiny, he and his works sink into irremediable obscurity; and too late he finds that having fed upon turtle is a more ready way to fame than having digested Tully.

The poor devil against whom fashion has set its face vainly alleges that he has been bred in every part of Europe where knowledge was to be sold; that he has grown pale in the study of nature and himself; his works may please upon the perusal, but his pretensions to fame are entirely disregarded; he is treated like a fiddler, whose music, though liked, is not much praised, because he lives by it; while a gentleman performer, though the most wretched scraper alive, throws the audience into raptures. The fiddler, indeed, may in such a case console himself by thinking that, while the other goes off with all the praise, he runs away with all the money; but here the parallel drops: for while the nobleman triumphs in unmerited applause, the author by profession steals off with—nothing.

The poor, therefore, here, who draw their pens auxiliary to

[1] "Let but his lordship write some dull lampoon,
He's *Horaced* up in doggrel like his own;
But if to tragedy his lordship yields—
False fame cries Athens; honest truth—Moorfields."—GARTH.

"What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starved hackney sonneteer, or me;
But let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies every fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought."—POPE.

the laws of their country, must think themselves very happy if they find, not fame, but forgiveness; and yet they are hardly treated; for as every country grows more polite the Press becomes more useful, and writers become more necessary as readers are supposed to increase. In a polished society that man, though in rags, who has the power of enforcing virtue from the Press is of more real use than forty stupid brachmans, or bonzes, or guebres, though they preached never so often, never so loud, or never so long. That man, though in rags, who is capable of deceiving even indolence into wisdom, and who professes amusement while he aims at reformation, is more useful in refined society than twenty cardinals, with all their scarlet, and tricked out in all the fopperies of scholastic finery.

LETTER LVIII.

A VISITATION DINNER DESCRIBED.

To the Same.

As the man in black takes every opportunity of introducing me to such company as may serve to indulge my speculative temper, or gratify my curiosity, I was by his influence lately invited to a *visitation* dinner. To understand this term you must know that it was formerly the custom here for the principal priests to go about the country once a year, and examine upon the spot whether those of subordinate orders did their duty or were qualified for the task; whether their temples were kept in proper repair or the laity pleased with their administration.

Though a visitation of this nature was very useful, yet it was found to be extremely troublesome, and for many reasons utterly inconvenient; for as the principal priests were obliged to attend at court, in order to solicit preferment, it was impossible they could at the same time attend in the country, which was quite out of the road of promotion; if we add to this the gout, which has been time immemorial a clerical disorder

—"Hob nob, doctor, which do you choose, white or red?"—"so, being fond of wild ducks and flummery"—"Take care of your band, sir, it may dip in the gravy." The doctor, now looking round, found not a single *eye* disposed to listen; wherefore, calling for a glass of wine, he gulped down the disappointment and the tale in a bumper.[1]

The conversation now began to be little more than a rhapsody of exclamations: as each had pretty well satisfied his own appetite he now found sufficient time to press others. "Excellent! the very thing! let me recommend the pig: do but taste the bacon; never eat a better thing in my life: exquisite! delicious!" This edifying discourse continued through three courses, which lasted as many hours, till every one of the company were unable to swallow or utter anything more.

It is very natural for men who are abridged in one excess to break into some other. The clergy here, particularly those who are advanced in years, think, if they are abstemious with regard to women and wine, they may indulge their other ap-

[1] "I would refer the reader to George Selwyn's 'Correspondence,' if he would desire to study attentively one of the latest full-blown specimens of the breed of clergymen engendered by this system, and introduce himself to by no means one of the most objectionable of the smoking, reading, claret-drinking, toadying, gormandizing, good-humored parsons of the time when Goldsmith lived and wrote. He will find Doctor Warner quite an ornament to the Establishment throughout that book, and only cursing, flinging, stamping, or gnashing when anything goes amiss with Selwyn. He will observe that the reverend doctor is ready to wager his best cassock against a dozen of claret any day; and that the holy man would quote you even texts with the most pious of his cloth, 'if our friend the countess had not blasted them.' In short, at whatever page he opens the 'Correspondence,' he will find parson Warner in the highest possible spirits, whether quizzing 'canting pot-bellied justices,' contemplating with equanimity 'a fine corpse at Surgeons' Hall,' or looking forward with hopeful vivacity to the time when he shall 'be a fine gray-headed old jollocks of sixty-five.' They who would hastily accuse Fielding of exaggeration in his portraitures taken from the Church should first contemplate this. Goldsmith is less severe in his exposure, but it is efficient, too; and I confess I never read a letter of Doctor Warner's, or think of his guzzling, his telling the same story over and over again, and his indifference to any kind of treatment shown him or service exacted of him so long as his bumper of claret is well filled, without being forcibly reminded of Doctor Marrowfat."—FORSTER'S *Life of Goldsmith*, vol. i. p. 278.

petites without censure. Thus some are found to rise in the morning only to a consultation with their cook about dinner, and, when that has been swallowed, make no other use of their faculties (if they have any) but to ruminate on the succeeding meal.

A debauch of wine is even more pardonable than this, since one glass insensibly leads on to another, and instead of sating whets the appetite. The progressive steps to it are cheerful and seducing; the grave are animated, the melancholy relieved, and there is even classic authority to countenance the excess. But in eating, after nature is once satisfied, every additional morsel brings stupidity and distempers with it; and, as one of their own poets expresses it,

> "The soul subsides, and wickedly inclines
> To seem but mortal, e'en in sound divines."[1]

Let me suppose, after such a meal as this I have been describing, while all the company are sitting in lethargic silence round the table, groaning under a load of soup, pig, pork, and bacon—let me suppose, I say, some hungry beggar with looks of want peeping through one of the windows and thus addressing the assembly: "Prithee, pluck those napkins from your chins; after nature is satisfied, all that you eat extraordinary is my property, and I claim it as mine. It was given you in order to relieve me, and not to oppress yourselves. How can they comfort or instruct others who can scarce feel their own existence, except from the unsavory returns of an ill-digested meal? But though neither you nor the cushions you sit upon will hear me, yet the world regards the excesses of its teachers with a prying eye, and notes their conduct with double severity." I know no other answer any one of the company could make to such an expostulation but this:

[1] "How pale, each worshipful and reverend guest
Rise from a clergy or a City feast!
What life in all that ample body, say?
What heav'nly particle inspires the clay?
The soul subsides, and wickedly inclines
To seem but mortal, e'en in sound divines."—POPE.

"Friend, you talk of our losing a character, and being disliked by the world; well, and supposing all this to be true, what then? who cares for the world? We'll preach for the world, and the world shall pay us for preaching, whether we like each other or not."

LETTER LIX.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER'S SON ESCAPES WITH THE BEAUTIFUL CAPTIVE FROM SLAVERY.

From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi, by the way of Moscow.

You will probably be pleased to see my letter dated from Terki, a city which lies beyond the bounds of the Persian Empire: here, blessed with security, with all that is dear, I double my raptures by communicating them to you; the mind sympathizing with the freedom of the body, my whole soul is dilated in gratitude, love, and praise.

Yet were my own happiness all that inspired my present joy, my raptures might justly merit the imputation of self-interest; but when I think that the beautiful Zelis is also free, forgive my triumph when I boast of having rescued from captivity the most deserving object upon earth.

You remember the reluctance she testified at being obliged to marry the tyrant she hated. Her compliance at last was only feigned, in order to gain time to try some future means of escape. During the interval between her promise and the intended performance of it, she came undiscovered one evening to the place where I generally retired after the fatigues of the day: her appearance was like that of an aerial genius, when it descends to minister comfort to undeserved distress; the mild lustre of her eye served to banish my timidity; her accents were sweeter than the echo of some distant symphony! "Unhappy stranger," said she, in the Persian language, "you here perceive one more wretched than thyself! All this solemnity of preparation, this elegance of dress, and the number of my attendants, serve but to increase my mis-

eries; if you have courage to rescue an unhappy woman from approaching ruin and our detested tyrant you may depend upon my future gratitude." I bowed to the ground, and she left me filled with rapture and astonishment. Night brought no rest, nor could the ensuing morning calm the anxieties of my mind. I projected a thousand methods for her delivery; but each, when strictly examined, appeared impracticable: in this uncertainty the evening again arrived, and I placed myself on my former station in hopes of a repeated visit. After some short expectation the bright perfection again appeared: I bowed as before to the ground; when, raising me up, she observed that the time was not to be spent in useless ceremony; she observed that the day following was appointed for the celebration of her nuptials, and that something was to be done that very night for our mutual deliverance. I offered with the utmost humility to pursue whatever scheme she should direct: upon which she proposed that instant to scale the garden wall, adding that she had prevailed upon a female slave, who was now waiting at the appointed place, to assist her with a ladder.

Pursuant to this information, I led her trembling to the place appointed; but instead of the slave we expected to see, Mostadad himself was there awaiting our arrival: the wretch in whom we confided, it seems, had betrayed our design to her master, and he now saw the most convincing proofs of her information. He was just going to draw his sabre, when a principle of avarice repressed his fury, and he resolved, after a severe chastisement, to dispose of me to another master; in the mean time he ordered me to be confined in the strictest manner, and the next day to receive a hundred blows on the soles of my feet.

When the morning came I was led out in order to receive the punishment, which, from the severity with which it is generally inflicted upon slaves, is worse even than death.

A trumpet was to be the signal for the solemnization of the nuptials of Zelis, and for the infliction of my punishment. Each ceremony, to me equally dreadful, was just going to begin, when we were informed that a large body of Circassian

Tartars had invaded the town, and were laying all in ruin. Every person now thought only of saving himself. I instantly unloosed the cords with which I was bound, and seizing a cimeter from one of the slaves, who had not courage to resist me, flew to the women's apartment where Zelis was confined, dressed out for the intended nuptials. I bade her follow me without delay, and going forward, cut my way through eunuchs, who made but a faint resistance. The whole city was now a scene of conflagration and terror; every person was willing to save himself, unmindful of others. In this confusion, seizing upon two of the fleetest coursers in the stable of Mostadad, we fled northward towards the kingdom of Circassia. As there were several others flying in the same manner we passed without notice, and in three days arrived at Terki, a city that lies in a valley within the bosom of the frowning mountains of Caucasus. Here, free from every apprehension of danger, we enjoy all those satisfactions which are consistent with virtue; though I find my heart at intervals give way to unusual passions, yet such is my admiration for my fair companion that I lose even tenderness in distant respect. Though her person demands particular regard even among the beauties of Circassia, yet is her mind far more lovely. How very different is a woman who thus has cultivated her understanding, and been refined into delicacy of sentiment, from the daughters of the East, whose education is only formed to improve the person, and make them more tempting objects of prostitution. Adieu.

LETTER LX.

THE HISTORY OF THE BEAUTIFUL CAPTIVE.

From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi, by the way of Moscow.

When sufficiently refreshed after the fatigues of our precipitate flight, my curiosity, which had been restrained by the appearance of immediate danger, now began to revive; I longed to know by what distressful accidents my fair fugitive

became a captive, and could not avoid testifying a surprise how so much beauty could be involved in the calamities from whence she had been so lately rescued.

"Talk not of personal charms," cried she, with emotion, "since to them I owe every misfortune. Look round on the numberless beauties of the country where we are, and see how nature has poured its charms upon every face; and yet by this profusion Heaven would seem to show how little it regards such a blessing, since the gift is lavished upon a nation of prostitutes.

"I perceive you desire to know my story, and your curiosity is not so great as my impatience to gratify it. I find a pleasure in telling past misfortunes to any, but when my deliverer is pleased with the relation my pleasure is prompted by duty.

"I was born in a country far to the west, where the men are braver and the women more fair than those of Circassia; where the valor of the hero is guided by wisdom, and where delicacy of sentiment points the shafts of female beauty.[1] I was the only daughter of an officer in the army, the child of his age, and, as he used fondly to express it, the only chain that bound him to the world or made his life pleasing. His station procured him an acquaintance with men of greater rank and fortune than himself, and his regard for me induced him to bring me into every family where he was acquainted. Thus I was early taught all the elegancies and fashionable foibles of such as the world calls polite, and though without fortune myself, was taught to despise those who lived as if they were poor.

"My intercourse with the great, and my affectation of

[1] "This story bears a striking similitude to the real history of Miss S——d, who accompanied Lady W——e in her retreat near Florence, and which the editor had from her own mouth."—GOLDSMITH. This eccentric lady was the daughter of Samuel Rolle, Esq., of Haynton, Devon. She married in 1724 Robert, afterwards second Earl of Orford; and again, in 1751, Mr. Sewallis Shirley, son of Lord Ferrers, from whom she was parted, as she had been from her first husband. In 1742 Count Richecourt, the chief minister at Florence, was her lover. She died at Pisa in 1781, "leaving," says Lord Orford, "everything in her power to her *friend* cavalier Mozzif, at Florence." See WALPOLE'S *Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 241.

grandeur, procured me many lovers; but want of fortune deterred them all from any other views than those of passing the present moment agreeably, or of meditating my future ruin. In every company I found myself addressed in a warmer strain of passion than other ladies who were superior in point of rank and beauty; and this I imputed to an excess of respect, which in reality proceeded from very different motives.

"Among the number of such as paid me their addresses was a gentleman, a friend of my father, rather in the decline of life, with nothing remarkable either in his person or address to recommend him. His age, which was about forty, his fortune, which was moderate and barely sufficient to support him, served to throw me off my guard, so that I considered him as the only sincere admirer I had.

"Designing lovers in the decline of life are ever most dangerous. Skilled in all the weaknesses of the sex, they seize each favorable opportunity; and by having less passion than youthful admirers, have less real respect, and therefore less timidity. This insidious wretch used a thousand arts to succeed in his base designs, all which I saw, but imputed to different views, because I thought it absurd to believe the real motives.

"As he continued to frequent my father's, the friendship between them became every day greater; and at last, from the intimacy with which he was received, I was taught to look upon him as a guardian and a friend. Though I never loved yet I esteemed him; and this was enough to make me wish for a union, for which he seemed desirous, but to which he feigned several delays; while in the mean time, from a false report of our being married, every other admirer forsook me.

"I was at last, however, awakened from the delusion by an account of his being just married to another young lady with a considerable fortune. This was no great mortification to me, as I had always regarded him merely from prudential motives; but it had a very different effect upon my father, who, rash and passionate by nature, and besides stimulated by

a mistaken notion of military honor, upbraided his friend in such terms that a challenge was soon given and accepted.

"It was about midnight when I was awakened by a message from my father, who desired to see me that moment. I rose with some surprise, and, following the messenger, attended only by another servant, came to a field not far from the house, where I found him, the assertor of my honor, my only friend and supporter, the tutor and companion of my youth, lying on one side covered over with blood, and just expiring. No tears streamed down my cheeks nor sigh escaped from my breast at an object of such terror. I sat down, and, supporting his aged head in my lap, gazed upon the ghastly visage with an agony more poignant even than despairing madness. The servants were gone for more assistance. In this gloomy stillness of the night no sounds were heard but his agonizing respiration; no object was presented but his wounds, which still continued to stream. With silent anguish I hung over his dear face, and with my hands strove to stop the blood as it flowed from his wounds. He seemed at first insensible, but at last turning his dying eyes upon me, 'My dear, dear child,' cried he—'dear, though you have forgotten your own honor and stained mine—I will yet forgive you; by abandoning virtue you have undone me and yourself, yet take my forgiveness with the same compassion I wish Heaven may pity me.' He expired. All my succeeding happiness fled with him. Reflecting that I was the cause of his death, whom only I loved upon earth; accused of betraying the honor of his family with his latest breath; conscious of my own innocence, yet without even a possibility of vindicating it; without fortune or friends to relieve or pity me; abandoned to infamy and the wide, censuring world, I called out upon the dead body that lay stretched before me, and in the agony of my heart asked why he could have left me thus! 'Why, my dear, my only papa—why could you ruin me thus and yourself forever? Oh, pity and return, since there is none but you to comfort me!'

"I soon found that I had real cause for sorrow; that I was to expect no compassion from my own sex, nor assistance

from the other; and that reputation was much more useful in our commerce with mankind than really to deserve it. Wherever I came, I perceived myself received either with contempt or detestation; or whenever I was civilly treated it was from the most base and ungenerous motives.

"Thus driven from the society of the virtuous, I was at last, in order to dispel the anxieties of insupportable solitude, obliged to take up with the company of those whose characters were blasted like my own; but who, perhaps, deserved their infamy. Among this number was a lady of the first distinction, whose character the public thought proper to brand even with greater infamy than mine. A similitude of distress soon united us; I knew that general reproach had made her miserable; and I had learned to regard misery as an excuse for guilt. Though this lady had not virtue enough to avoid reproach, yet she had too much delicate sensibility not to feel it. She therefore proposed our leaving the country where we were born, and going to live in Italy, where our characters and misfortunes would be unknown. With this I eagerly complied, and we soon found ourselves in one of the most charming retreats in the most beautiful province of that enchanting country.

"Had my companion chosen this as a retreat for injured virtue, a harbor where we might look with tranquillity on the distant angry world, I should have been happy; but very different was her design; she had pitched upon this situation only to enjoy those pleasures in private which she had not sufficient effrontery to satisfy in a more open manner. A nearer acquaintance soon showed me the vicious part of her character; her mind, as well as her body, seemed formed only for pleasure; she was sentimental only as it served to protract the immediate enjoyment. Formed for society alone, she spoke infinitely better than she wrote, and wrote infinitely better than she lived. A person devoted to pleasure often leads the most miserable life imaginable; such was her case; she considered the natural moments of languor as insupportable, passed all her hours between rapture and anxiety; ever in an extreme of agony or of bliss. She felt a pain as sincere

for want of appetite as the starving wretch who wants a meal. In those intervals she usually kept her bed, and rose only when in expectation of some new enjoyment. The luxuriant air of the country, the romantic situation of her palace, and the genius of a people whose only happiness lies in sensual refinement, all contributed to banish the remembrance of her native country.

"But though such a life gave her pleasure it had a very different effect upon me; I grew every day more pensive, and my melancholy was regarded as an insult upon her good-humor. I now perceived myself entirely unfit for all society; discarded from the good, and detesting the infamous, I seemed in a state of war with every rank of people; that virtue, which should have been my protection in the world, was here my crime: in short, detesting life, I was determined to become a recluse, to leave a world where I found no pleasure that could allure me to stay. Thus determined, I embarked in order to go by sea to Rome, where I intended to take the veil; but even in so short a passage my hard fortune still attended me: our ship was taken by a Barbary corsair—the whole crew, and I among the number, being made slaves. It carries too much the air of romance to inform you of my distresses or obstinacy in this miserable state; it is enough to observe that I have been bought by several masters, each of whom perceiving my reluctance, rather than use violence, sold me to another, till it was my happiness to be at last rescued by you."

Thus ended her relation, which I have abridged; but as soon as we are arrived at Moscow, for which we intend to set out shortly, you shall be informed of all more particularly. In the mean time the greatest addition to my happiness will be to hear of yours. Adieu.

show away: the resentment of a poor man is like the efforts of a harmless insect to sting; it may get him crushed, but cannot defend him. Who values that anger which is consumed only in empty menaces?

Once upon a time a goose fed its young by a pond-side; and a goose in such circumstances is always extremely proud and excessive punctilious. If any other animal, without the least design to offend, happened to pass that way, the goose was immediately at him. The pond, she said, was hers, and she would maintain a right in it, and support her honor, while she had a bill to hiss or a wing to flutter. In this manner she drove away ducks, pigs, and chickens; nay, even the insidious cat was seen to scamper. A lounging mastiff, however, happened to pass by, and thought it no harm if he should lap a little of the water, as he was thirsty. The guardian goose flew at him like a fury, pecked at him with her beak, and sapped him with her feathers. The dog grew angry, had twenty times a good mind to give her a sly snap; but suppressing his indignation, because his master was nigh, "A pox take thee," cries he, "for a fool! sure, those who have neither strength nor weapons to fight at least should be civil, [that fluttering and hissing of thine may one day get thine head snapped off, but it can neither injure thy enemies or ever protect thee]."[1] So saying, he went forward to the pond, quenched his thirst in spite of the goose, and followed his master.

Another obstruction to the fortune of youth is that, while they are willing to take offence from none, they are also equally desirous of giving nobody offence. From hence they endeavor to please all, comply with every request, attempt to suit themselves to every company, have no will of their own, but like wax catch every contiguous impression. By thus attempting to give universal satisfaction, they at last find themselves miserably disappointed: to bring the generality of admirers on our side, it is sufficient to attempt pleasing a very few.

[1] The passage in brackets [] is not in the Essays, 1765 and 1766.

A painter of eminence was once resolved to finish a piece which should please the whole world. When, therefore, he had drawn a picture in which his utmost skill was exhausted, it was exposed in the public market-place, with directions at the bottom for every spectator to mark with a brush, which lay by, every limb and feature which seemed erroneous. The spectators came, and in general applauded; but each, willing to show his talent at criticism, marked whatever he thought proper. At evening, when the painter came, he was mortified to find the whole picture one universal blot; not a single stroke that was not stigmatized with marks of disapprobation. Not satisfied with this trial, the next day he was resolved to try them in a different manner, and, exposing his picture as before, desired that every spectator would mark those beauties he approved or admired. The people complied; and the artist returning found his picture replete with the marks of beauty; every stroke that had been yesterday condemned now received the character of approbation. "Well," cries the painter, "I now find that the best way to please one-half of the world is not to mind what the other half says; since what are faults in the eyes of these, shall be by those regarded as beauties."[1] Adieu.

LETTER LXII.

HISTORY OF CATHARINA ALEXOWNA, WIFE OF PETER THE GREAT.

From the Same.

A CHARACTER, such as you have represented that of your fair companion, which continues virtuous though loaded with infamy, is truly great. Many regard virtue because it is attended with applause; your favorite only for the internal pleasure it confers. I have often wished that ladies like her were proposed as models for female imitation, and not such

[1] "Well," cries the painter, "I now find that the best way to please all the world is to attempt pleasing one-half of it."—*Essays*, 1765 and 1766.

miserable by nature, but rendered still more hideous by the Swedes and Russians, who, as each happened to become masters, plundered it at discretion; but hunger had taught her to despise the dangers and fatigues of the way.

One evening upon her journey, as she had entered a cottage by the wayside, to take up her lodging for the night, she was insulted by two Swedish soldiers, who insisted upon qualifying her, as they termed it, to follow the camp. They might probably have carried their insults into violence, had not a subaltern officer, accidentally passing by, come in to her assistance; upon his appearing, the soldiers immediately desisted; but her thankfulness was hardly greater than her surprise when she instantly recollected in her deliverer the son of the Lutheran minister, her former instructor, benefactor, and friend.

This was a happy interview for Catharina: the little stock of money she had brought from home was by this time quite exhausted; her clothes were gone, piece by piece, in order to satisfy those who had entertained her in their houses. Her generous countryman, therefore, parted with what he could spare to buy her clothes, furnished her with a horse, and gave her letters of recommendation to Mr. Gluck, a faithful friend of his father's and superintendent of Marienburg.

Our beautiful stranger had only to appear to be well received; she was immediately admitted into the superintendent's family as governess to his two daughters; and though yet but seventeen, showed herself capable of instructing her sex not only in virtue but politeness. Such was her good sense and beauty, that her master himself in a short time offered her his hand, which, to his great surprise, she thought proper to refuse. Actuated by a principle of gratitude, she was resolved to marry her deliverer only, even though he had lost an arm, and was otherwise disfigured by wounds in the service.

In order, therefore, to prevent further solicitations from others, as soon as the officer came to town upon duty she offered him her person, which he accepted with transport, and their nuptials were solemnized as usual. But all the lines of her fortune were to be striking: the very day on which they

were married the Russians laid siege to Marienburg. The unhappy soldier had now no time to enjoy the well-earned pleasures of matrimony; he was called off before consummation to an attack, from which he was never after seen to return.

In the mean time the siege went on with fury, aggravated on one side by obstinacy, on the other by revenge. This war between the two Northern powers at that time was truly barbarous; the innocent peasant and the harmless virgin often shared the fate of the soldier in arms. Marienburg was taken by assault; and such was the fury of the assailants, that not only the garrison, but almost all the inhabitants—men, women, and children—were put to the sword. At length, when the carnage was pretty well over, Catharina was found hid in an oven.

She had been hitherto poor, but still was free; she was now to conform to her hard fate, and learn what it was to be a slave: in this situation, however, she behaved with piety and humility; and though misfortunes had abated her vivacity, yet she was cheerful. The fame of her merit and resignation reached even Prince Menzikoff, the Russian general: he desired to see her, was struck with her beauty, bought her from the soldier her master, and placed her under the direction of his own sister. Here she was treated with all the respect which her merit deserved, while her beauty every day improved with her good fortune.

She had not been long in this situation, when Peter the Great, paying the prince a visit, Catharina happened to come in with some dry fruits, which she served round with peculiar modesty. The mighty monarch saw and was struck with her beauty. He returned the next day, called for the beautiful slave, asked her several questions, and found her understanding even more perfect than her person.

He had been forced when young to marry from motives of interest; he was now resolved to marry pursuant to his own inclinations. He immediately inquired the history of the fair Livonian, who was not yet eighteen. He traced her through the vale of obscurity, through all the vicissitudes of her fortune, and found her truly great in them all. The

meanness of her birth was no obstruction to his design; their nuptials were solemnized in private, the prince assuring his courtiers that virtue alone was the properest ladder to a throne.

We now see Catharina, from the low mud-walled cottage, empress of the greatest kingdom upon earth. The poor solitary wanderer is now surrounded by thousands who find happiness in her smile. She who formerly wanted a meal is now capable of diffusing plenty upon whole nations. To her fortune she owed a part of this pre-eminence, but to her virtues more.[1]

She ever after retained those great qualities which first placed her on a throne; and while the extraordinary prince, her husband, labored for the reformation of his male subjects, she studied in her turn the improvement of her own sex. She altered their dresses, introduced mixed assemblies, instituted an order of female knighthood; and at length, when she had greatly filled all the stations of empress, friend, wife, and mother, bravely died without regret, regretted by all. Adieu.

LETTER LXIII.

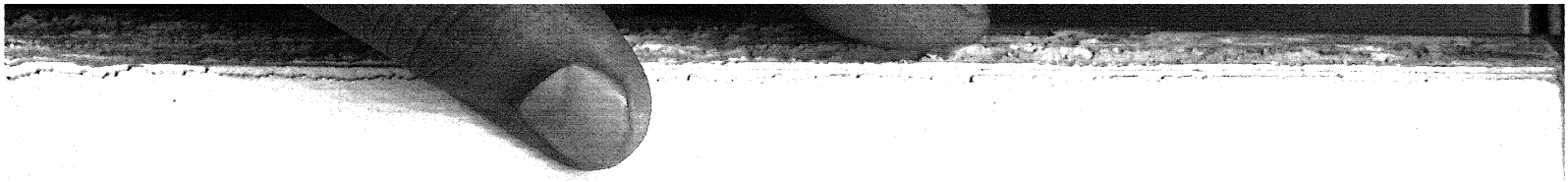
THE RISE OR THE DECLINE OF LITERATURE NOT DEPENDENT ON MAN, BUT RESULTING FROM THE VICISSITUDES OF NATURE.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

In every letter I expect accounts of some new revolutions in China, some strange occurrence in the state, or disaster among my private acquaintance. I open every packet with tremulous expectation, and am agreeably disappointed when I find my friends and my country continuing in felicity. I

[1] "There have been," says Voltaire, "instances, before this, of private persons being raised to the throne; but that a poor stranger, who had been discovered amid the ruins of a plundered town, should become the absolute sovereign of that very empire into which she was led captive, is an incident which fortune and merit have never before produced in the annals of the world."

Voltaire



wander, but they are at rest; they suffer few changes but what pass in my own restless imagination; it is only the rapidity of my own motion that gives an imaginary swiftness to objects which are in some measure immovable.[1]

Yet believe me, my friend, that even China itself is imperceptibly degenerating from her ancient greatness: her laws are now more venal, and her merchants are more deceitful than formerly; the very arts and sciences have run to decay. Observe the carvings on our ancient bridges; figures that add grace even to nature. There is not an artist now in all the empire that can imitate their beauty. Our manufactures in porcelain, too, are inferior to what we once were famous for; and even Europe now begins to excel us. There was a time when China was the receptacle of strangers; when all were welcome who either came to improve the state, or admire its greatness: now, the empire is shut up from every foreign improvement, and the very inhabitants discourage each other from prosecuting their own internal advantages.

Whence this degeneracy in a state so little subject to external revolutions? how happens it that China, which is now more powerful than ever, which is less subject to foreign invasions, and even assisted in some discoveries by her connections with Europe; whence comes it, I say, that the empire is thus declining so fast into barbarity?

This decay is surely from nature, and not the result of voluntary degeneracy. In a period of two or three thousand years she seems at proper intervals to produce great minds, with an effort resembling that which introduces the vicissitudes of seasons. They rise up at once, continue for an age, enlighten the world, fall like ripened corn, and mankind again gradually relapse into pristine barbarity. We little ones look around, are amazed at the decline, seek after the causes of this invisible decay, attribute to want of encouragement what really proceeds from want of power, are astonished to find

[1] "Before my brother Charles came hither, my thoughts sometimes found refuge from severe studies among my friends in Ireland. I fancied strange revolutions at home; but I find it was the rapidity of my own motion that gave an imaginary one to objects really at rest."—GOLDSMITH *to D. Hodson, Esq.*, Dec. 27, 1757.

every art and every science in the decline, not considering that autumn is over, and fatigued nature again begins to repose for some succeeding effort.

Some periods have been remarkable for the production of men of extraordinary stature, others for producing some particular animals in great abundance; some for excessive plenty, and others again for seemingly causeless famine. Nature, which shows herself so very different in her visible productions, must surely differ also from herself in the production of minds, and while she astonishes one age with the strength and stature of Milo or a Maximin, may bless another with the wisdom of a Plato, or the goodness of an Antonine.

Let us not, then, attribute to accident the falling off of every nation, but to the natural revolution of things. Often in the darkest ages there has appeared some one man of surprising abilities, who, with all his understanding, failed to bring his barbarous age into refinement: all mankind seemed to sleep till nature gave the general call, and then the whole world seemed at once roused at the voice; science triumphed in every country, and the brightness of a single genius seemed lost in a galaxy of contiguous glory.

Thus, the enlightened periods in every age have been universal. At the time when China first began to emerge from barbarity, the Western world was equally rising into refinement; when we had our Yaou,[1] they had their Sesostris. In succeeding ages Confucius[2] and Pythagoras seem born nearly

[1] Yaou, the pattern of all Chinese emperors, is said to have commenced his reign 2357 years before Christ. According to the Shoo-king (one of the five canonical works), he commissioned Hi and Ho, and other eminent astronomers, to observe the revolutions of the heavens, and to proclaim the periods of the different seasons. By the assistance of these learned men, he fixed the length of the year at 365¼ days, and at 366 in every fourth year.—See DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 171.

[2] "The family of Confucius is, in my opinion, the most illustrious in the world. After a painful ascent of eight or ten centuries, our barons and princes of Europe are lost in the darkness of the Middle Ages; but, in the vast equality of the empire of China, the posterity of Confucius have maintained, above two thousand two hundred years, this peaceful honor and perpetual succession. The chief of the family is still revered, by the sovereign and the people, as the lively image of the wisest of mankind."—GIBBON, *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. p. 3.

together, and a train of philosophers then sprung up as well in Greece as in China. The period of renewed barbarity began to have a universal spread much about the same time, and continued for several centuries, till, in the year of the Christian era 1400, the emperor Yong-lo[1] arose to revive the learning of the East; while, about the same time, the Medicean family labored in Italy to raise infant genius from the cradle.[2] Thus, we see politeness spreading over every part of the world in one age, and barbarity succeeding in another—at one period a blaze of light diffusing itself over the whole world, and at another all mankind wrapped up in the profoundest ignorance.

Such has been the situation of things in times past; and such probably it will ever be. China, I have observed, has evidently begun to degenerate from its former politeness; and, were the learning of the Europeans at present candidly considered, the decline would perhaps appear to have already taken place. We should find among the natives of the West the study of morality displaced for mathematical disquisition or metaphysical subtleties; we should find learning begin to separate from the useful duties and concerns of life, while none ventured to aspire after that character, but they who know much more than is truly amusing or useful. We should find every great attempt suppressed by prudence, and the rapturous sublimity in writing cooled by a cautious fear of offence. We should find few of those daring spirits, who bravely venture to be wrong, and who are willing to hazard much for the sake of great acquisitions. Providence has in-

[1] Yong-lo ascended the throne A.D. 1400. On his accession, the capital was transferred to Pekin; and in his reign Timour, or Tamerlane, died on his way to the conquest of China.

[2] "But see! each Muse, in Leo's golden days,
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays;
Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then Sculpture and her sister arts revive;
Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live:
With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung."—POPE.

dulged the world with a period of almost four hundred years' refinement: does it not now by degrees sink us into our former ignorance, leaving us only the love of wisdom, while it deprives us of its advantages? Adieu.

LETTER LXIV.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE HAPPINESS FOR SHOW.—THEIR FOLLY IN THIS RESPECT OF USE TO SOCIETY.

From the Same.

THE princes of Europe have found out a manner of rewarding their subjects who have behaved well, by presenting them with about two yards of blue ribbon, which is worn about the shoulder. They who are honored with this mark of distinction are called knights, and the king himself is always the head of the order. This is a very frugal method of recompensing the most important services; and it is very fortunate for kings that their subjects are satisfied with such trifling rewards. Should a nobleman happen to lose his leg in a battle, the king presents him with two yards of ribbon, and he is paid for the loss of his limb. Should an ambassador spend all his paternal fortune in supporting the honor of his country abroad, the king presents him with two yards of ribbon, which is to be considered as an equivalent to his estate. In short, while a European king has a yard of blue or green ribbon left, he need be under no apprehension of wanting statesmen, generals, and soldiers.

I cannot sufficiently admire those kingdoms in which men with large patrimonial estates are willing thus to undergo real hardships for empty favors. A person already possessed of a competent fortune, who undertakes to enter the career of ambition, feels many real inconveniences from his station, while it procures him no real happiness that he was not possessed of before. He could eat, drink, and sleep before he became a courtier as well, perhaps better, than when invested with his authority. He could command flatterers in a private

station as well as in his public capacity, and indulge at home every favorite inclination, uncensured and unseen by the people.

What real good, then, does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure? Not any. Could the great man, by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement.

Was he, by having his one thousand made two, thus enabled to enjoy two wives or eat two dinners, then, indeed, he might be excused for undergoing some pain in order to extend the sphere of his enjoyments. But, on the contrary, he finds his desire for pleasure often lessen as he takes pains to be able to improve it; and his capacity of enjoyment diminishes as his fortune happens to increase.

Instead, therefore, of regarding the great with envy, I generally consider them with some share of compassion. I look upon them as a set of good-natured, misguided people, who are indebted to us and not to themselves for all the happiness they enjoy. For our pleasure, and not their own, they sweat under a cumbrous heap of finery; for our pleasure the lackeyed train, the slow parading pageant, with all the gravity of grandeur, moves in review; a single coat, or a single footman, answers all the purposes of the most indolent refinement as well; and those who have twenty may be said to keep one for their own pleasure, and the other nineteen merely for ours. So true is the observation of Confucius, that "we take greater pains to persuade others that we are happy than in endeavoring to think so ourselves."

But though this desire of being seen, of being made the subject of discourse, and of supporting the dignities of an exalted station be troublesome enough to the ambitious, yet it is well for society that there are men thus willing to exchange ease and safety for danger and a ribbon. We lose nothing by their vanity, and it would be unkind to endeavor to deprive a child of its rattle. If a duke or a duchess are willing to carry a long train for our entertainment, so much the worse for themselves; if they choose to exhibit in public, with a hundred lackeys and Mamelukes in their equipage, for our entertain-

ment, still so much the worse for themselves; it is the spectators alone who give and receive the pleasure; they only are the sweating figures that swell the pageant.

A mandarin, who took much pride in appearing with a number of jewels on every part of his robe, was once accosted by an old sly bonze, who, following him through several streets, and bowing often to the ground, thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarin. "Friend, I never gave thee any of my jewels." "No," replied the other; "but you let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself; so there is no difference between us, except that you have the trouble of watching them, and that is an employment I don't much desire." Adieu.

LETTER LXV.

THE HISTORY OF A PHILOSOPHIC COBBLER.

From the Same.

Though not very fond of seeing a pageant myself, yet I am generally pleased with being in the crowd which sees it; it is amusing to observe the effect which such a spectacle has upon the variety of faces—the pleasure it excites in some, the envy in others, and the wishes it raises in all. With this design I lately went to see the entry of a foreign ambassador, resolved to make one in the mob, to shout as they shouted, to fix with earnestness upon the same frivolous objects, and participate for a while the pleasures and the wishes of the vulgar.

Struggling here for some time, in order to be first to see the cavalcade as it passed, some one of the crowd unluckily happened to tread upon my shoe, and tore it in such a manner that I was utterly unqualified to march forward with the main body, and obliged to fall back in the rear. Thus rendered incapable of being a spectator of the show myself, I was at least willing to observe the spectators, and limped behind like one of the invalids which follow the march of an army.

In this plight, as I was considering the eagerness that ap-

peared on every face—how some bustled to get foremost, and others contented themselves with taking a transient peep when they could; how some praised the four black servants that were stuck behind one of the equipages, and some the ribbons that decorated the horses' necks in another—my attention was called off to an object more extraordinary than any that I had yet seen: a poor cobbler sat in his stall by the wayside, and continued to work while the crowd passed by, without testifying the smallest share of curiosity. I own his want of attention excited mine; and as I stood in need of his assistance, I thought it best to employ a philosophic cobbler on this occasion. Perceiving my business, therefore, he desired me to enter and sit down, took my shoe in his lap, and began to mend it with his usual indifference and taciturnity.

"How, my friend," said I to him, "can you continue to work while all those fine things are passing by your door?" "Very fine they are, master," returned the cobbler, "for those that like them, to be sure; but what are all those fine things to me? You don't know what it is to be a cobbler, and so much the better for yourself. Your bread is baked; you may go and see sights the whole day, and eat a warm supper when you come home at night; but for me, if I should run hunting after all these fine folk, what should I get by my journey but an appetite?—and, God help me! I have too much of that at home already, without stirring out for it. Your people who may eat four meals a day and a supper at night are but a bad example to such a one as I. No, master; as God has called me into this world in order to mend old shoes, I have no business with fine folk, and they no business with me." I here interrupted him with a smile. "See this last, master," continues he, "and this hammer; this last and hammer are the two best friends I have in this world; nobody else will be my friend, because I want a friend. The great folks you saw pass by just now have five hundred friends, because they have no occasion for them; now, while I stick to my good friends here, I am very contented; but when I ever so little run after sights and fine things, I begin to hate my work, I grow sad, and have no heart to mend shoes any longer."

virtues with the same applause, with which we consider our own. While we entertain the passion, it pleases us; we cherish it with delight, and give it up with reluctance; and love for love is all the reward we expect or desire.

Gratitude, on the contrary, is never conferred but where there have been previous endeavors to excite it; we consider it as a debt, and our spirits wear a load till we have discharged the obligation. Every acknowledgment of gratitude is a circumstance of humiliation; and some are found to submit to frequent mortifications of this kind, proclaiming what obligations they owe, merely because they think it in some measure cancels the debt.

Thus love is the most easy and agreeable, and gratitude the most humiliating affection of the mind: we never reflect on the man we *love* without exulting in our choice; while he who has bound us to him by *benefits* alone rises to our idea as a person to whom we have in some measure forfeited our freedom. Love and gratitude are seldom, therefore, found in the same breast without impairing each other; we may tender the one or the other singly to those we converse with, but cannot command both together. By attempting to increase, we diminish them; the mind becomes bankrupt under too large obligations; all additional benefits lessen every hope of future return, and shut up every avenue that leads to tenderness.

In all our connections with society, therefore, it is not only generous but prudent to appear insensible of the value of those favors we bestow, and endeavor to make the obligation seem as slight as possible. Love must be taken by stratagem, and not by open force: we should seem ignorant that we oblige, and leave the mind at full liberty to give or refuse its affections; for constraint may, indeed, leave the receiver still grateful, but it will certainly produce disgust.

If to procure gratitude be our only aim, there is no great art in making the acquisition—a benefit conferred demands a just acknowledgment, and we have a right to insist upon our due.

But it were much more prudent to forego our right on such

an occasion, and exchange it, if we can, for love. We receive but little advantage from repeated protestations of gratitude, but they cost him very much from whom we exact them in return; exacting a grateful acknowledgment is demanding a debt by which the creditor is not advantaged, and the debtor pays with reluctance.

As Mencius the philosopher was travelling in pursuit of wisdom, night overtook him at the foot of a gloomy mountain, remote from the habitations of men. Here, as he was straying, while rain and thunder conspired to make solitude still more hideous, he perceived a hermit's cell, and approaching, asked for shelter. "Enter," cries the hermit, in a severe tone; "men deserve not to be obliged, but it would be imitating their ingratitude to treat them as they deserve. Come in. Examples of vice may sometimes strengthen us in the ways of virtue."

After a frugal meal, which consisted of roots and tea, Mencius could not repress his curiosity to know why the hermit had retired from mankind, the actions of whom taught the truest lessons of wisdom. "Mention not the name of man," cries the hermit, with indignation; "here let me live retired from a base, ungrateful world; here among the beasts of the forest I shall find no flatterers; the lion is a generous enemy, and the dog a faithful friend; but man, base man, can poison the bowl and smile while he presents it." "You have been used ill by mankind?" interrupted the philosopher, shrewdly. "Yes," returned the hermit, "on mankind I have exhausted my whole fortune, and this staff and that cup and those roots are all that I have in return." "Did you bestow your fortune, or did you only lend it?" returned Mencius. "I bestowed it, undoubtedly," replied the other; "for where were the merit of being a money-lender?" "Did they ever own that they received it?" still adds the philosopher. "A thousand times," cries the hermit; "they every day loaded me with professions of gratitude for obligations received, and solicitations for future favors." "If, then," says Mencius, smiling, "you did not lend your fortune in order to have it returned, it is unjust to accuse them of ingratitude; they owned them-

selves obliged—you expected no more—and they certainly earned each favor by frequently acknowledging the obligation." The hermit was struck with the reply, and, surveying his guest with emotion, "I have heard of the great Mencius, and you certainly are the man; I am now fourscore years old, but still a child in wisdom; take me back to the school of man, and educate me as one of the most ignorant and the youngest of your disciples!"

Indeed, my son, it is better to have friends in our passage through life than grateful dependents; and as love is a more willing so it is a more lasting tribute, than extorted obligation. As we are uneasy when greatly obliged, gratitude once refused can never after be recovered; the mind that is base enough to disallow the just return, instead of feeling any uneasiness upon recollection, triumphs in its new-acquired freedom, and in some measure is pleased with conscious baseness.

Very different is the situation of disagreeing friends; their separation produces mutual uneasiness; like that divided being in fabulous creation, their sympathetic souls once more desire their former union; the joys of both are imperfect; their gayest moments tinctured with uneasiness, each seeks for the smallest concessions to clear the way to a wished-for explanation; the most trifling acknowledgment, the slightest accident serves to effect a mutual reconciliation.

But, instead of pursuing the thought, permit me to soften the severity of advice by a European story which will fully illustrate my meaning.

A fiddler and his wife, who had rubbed through life as most couples usually do—sometimes good friends, at others not quite so well—one day happened to have a dispute, which was conducted with becoming spirit on both sides. The wife was sure she was right, and the husband was resolved to have his own way. What was to be done in such a case? The quarrel grew worse by explanations, and at last the fury of both rose to such a pitch that they made a vow never to sleep together in the same bed for the future. This was the most rash vow that could be imagined, for they still were friends at bottom, and besides, they had but one bed in the house; however, re-

solved they were to go through with it, and at night the fiddle-case was laid in bed between them, in order to make a separation. In this manner they continued for three weeks, every night the fiddle-case being placed as a barrier to divide them.

"By this time, however, each heartily repented of their vow; their resentment was at an end, and their love began to return; they wished the fiddle-case away, but both had too much spirit to begin. One night, however, as they were both lying awake, with the detested fiddle-case between them, the husband happened to sneeze; to which the wife, as is usual in such cases, bid God bless him.[1] "Ay, but," returns the husband, "woman, do you say that from your heart?" "Indeed I do, my poor Nicholas," cries his wife; "I say it with all my heart." "If so, then," says the husband, "we had as good remove the fiddle-case."

LETTER LXVII.

THE FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO LEARN WISDOM BY BEING A RECLUSE.[2]

From the Same.

Books, my son, while they teach us to respect the interests of others, often make us unmindful of our own: while they instruct the youthful reader to grasp at social happiness, he grows miserable in detail, and, attentive to universal harmony, often forgets that he himself has a part to sustain in the concert. I dislike, therefore, the philosopher who describes the inconveniences of life in such pleasing colors that the pupil

[1] "As much as to say, 'May God so bless you as that portends;' for as sneezing is beneficial to the head, and an effort of nature to remove an obstruction, or to throw off anything that either clogs or stimulates, so it was anciently reckoned a good omen."—Xenophon, *Cyrop.* iii. c. 2. *Anonymiana*, p. 262.

[2] Many of the observations in this paper are to be found in Goldsmith's letters and in others of his writings, and allude, as he indeed admits, to his own outset in life.

grows enamored of distress, longs to try the charms of poverty, meets it without dread, nor fears its inconveniences till he severely feels them.

A youth who has thus spent his life among books, new to the world, and unacquainted with man but by philosophic information, may be considered as a being whose mind is filled with the vulgar errors of the wise: utterly unqualified for a journey through life, yet confident of his own skill in the direction, he sets out with confidence, blunders on with vanity, and finds himself at last undone.

He first has learned from books, and then lays it down as a maxim, that all mankind are virtuous or vicious in excess; and he has been long taught to detest vice and love virtue: warm, therefore, in attachments, and steadfast in enmity, he treats every creature as a friend or foe; expects from those he loves unerring integrity, and consigns his enemies to the reproach of wanting every virtue. On this principle he proceeds; and here begin his disappointments. Upon a closer inspection of human nature he perceives that he should have moderated his friendship, and softened his severity; for he often finds the excellences of one part of mankind clouded with vice, and the faults of the other brightened with virtue; he finds no character so sanctified that has not its failings, none so infamous but has somewhat to attract our esteem; he beholds impiety in lawn, and fidelity in fetters.

He now, therefore, but too late, perceives that his regards should have been more cool, and his hatred less violent; that the truly wise seldom court romantic friendships with the good, and avoid, if possible, the resentment even of the wicked: every moment gives him fresh instances that the bonds of friendship are broken if drawn too closely, and that those whom he has treated with disrespect more than retaliate the injury. At length, therefore, he is obliged to confess that he has declared war upon the vicious half of mankind, without being able to form an alliance among the virtuous to espouse his quarrel.

Our book-taught philosopher, however, is now too far advanced to recede; and though poverty be the just conse-

quence of the many enemies his conduct has created, yet he is resolved to meet it without shrinking. Philosophers have described poverty in most charming colors, and even his vanity is touched in thinking that he shall show the world in himself one more example of patience, fortitude, and resignation. "Come then, O Poverty! for what is there in thee dreadful to the wise? Temperance, health, and frugality walk in thy train; cheerfulness and liberty are ever thy companions. Shall any be ashamed of thee, of whom Cincinnatus was not ashamed? The running brook, the herbs of the field, can amply satisfy nature; man wants but little, nor that little long.[1] Come, then, O Poverty, while kings stand by and gaze with admiration at the true philosopher's resignation."

The goddess appears; for Poverty ever comes at the call: but, alas! he finds her by no means the charming figure books and his warm imagination had painted. As when an Eastern bride, whom her friends and relations had long described as a model of perfection, pays her first visit, the longing bridegroom lifts the veil to see a face he had never seen before; but, instead of a countenance blazing with beauty like the sun, he beholds deformity shooting icicles to his heart; such appears Poverty to her new entertainer; all the fabric of enthusiasm is at once demolished, and a thousand miseries rise upon its ruins, while Contempt, with pointing finger, is foremost in the hideous procession.

The poor man now finds that he can get no kings to look at him while he is eating; he finds that, in proportion as he grows poor, the world turns its back upon him, and gives him leave to act the philosopher in all the majesty of solitude. It might be agreeable enough to play the philosopher while we are conscious that mankind are spectators; but what signifies wearing the mask of sturdy contentment, and mounting the stage of restraint, when not one creature will assist at the exhibition?[2] Thus is he forsaken of men, while his fortitude

[1] "Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long."—GOLDSMITH, *Edwin and Angelina.*

[2] A similar train of thought will be found in Letter CXIX.—On the Distresses

wants the satisfaction even of self-applause; for either he does not feel his present calamities, and that is natural insensibility, or he disguises his feelings, and that is dissimulation.

Spleen now begins to take up the man: not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards all mankind with detestation; and, commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.

It has been said that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. The censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited: the discontented being who retires from society is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience, and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind. Adieu.

LETTER LXVIII.

QUACKS RIDICULED.—SOME PARTICULARLY MENTIONED.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy, at Pekin.

I FORMERLY acquainted thee, most grave Fum, with the excellence of the English in the art of healing. The Chinese boast their skill in pulses, the Siamese their botanical knowledge, but the English advertising physicians alone of being the great restorers of health, the dispensers of youth, and the insurers of longevity. I can never enough admire[1] the sagacity of this country for the encouragement given to the professors of this art: with what indulgence does she foster up those of her own growth, and kindly cherish those that come from abroad! Like a skilful gardener, she invites them from every foreign climate to herself. Here every great exotic strikes root as soon as imported, and feels the genial beam of

of the Poor: "Where is the magnanimity of bearing misfortunes when the whole world is looking on? Men, in such circumstances, can act bravely, even from motives of vanity."

[1] The passage commencing "I can never enough admire," etc., was reprinted in part by its author in his Essays, 1765, as Essay No. XX.

favor; while the mighty metropolis, like one vast munificent dunghill, receives them indiscriminately to her breast, and supplies each with more than native nourishment.

In other countries the physician pretends to cure disorders in the lump: the same doctor who combats the gout in the toe shall pretend to prescribe for a pain in the head, and he who at one time cures a consumption shall at another give drugs for a dropsy. How absurd and ridiculous! this is being a mere jack-of-all-trades. Is the animal machine less complicated than a brass pin? Not less than ten different hands are required to make a pin; and shall the body be set right by one single operator?

The English are sensible of the force of this reasoning; they have, therefore, one doctor for the eyes, another for the toes; they have their sciatica doctors, and inoculating doctors; they have one doctor who is modestly content with securing them from bug-bites, and five hundred who prescribe for the bite of mad dogs.

The learned are not here retired, with vicious modesty, from public view; for every dead wall is covered with their names, their abilities, their amazing cures, and places of abode. Few patients can escape falling into their hands, unless blasted by lightning or struck dead with some sudden disorder. It may sometimes happen that a stranger who does not understand English, or a countryman who cannot read, dies without ever hearing of the vivifying drops or restorative electuary; but, for my part, before I was a week in town I had learned to bid the whole catalogue of disorders defiance, and was perfectly acquainted with the names and the medicines of every great man or great woman of them all.

But as nothing pleases curiosity more than anecdotes of the great, however minute or trifling, I must present you, inadequate as my abilities are to the subject, with some account of those personages who lead in this honorable profession.

The first upon this list of glory is Doctor Richard Rock, F.U.N. This great man, short of stature, is fat, and waddles as he walks. He always wears a white, three-tailed wig, nicely combed and frizzed upon each cheek; sometimes he car-

ries a cane, but a hat never. It is, indeed, very remarkable that this extraordinary personage should never wear a hat, but so it is—he never wears a hat. He is usually drawn, at the top of his own bills, sitting in his arm-chair, holding a little bottle between his finger and thumb, and surrounded with rotten teeth, nippers, pills, packets, and gallipots. No man can promise fairer nor better than he; for, as he observes, "Be your disorder never so far gone, be under no uneasiness, make yourself quite easy; I can cure you."

The next in fame, though by some reckoned of equal pretensions, is Doctor Timothy Franks, F.O.G.H., living in a place called the Old Bailey. As Rock is remarkably squab, his great rival Franks is as remarkably tall. He was born in the year of the Christian era 1692, and is, while I now write, exactly sixty-eight years three months and four days old. Age, however, has no way impaired his usual health and vivacity: I am told he generally walks with his breast open. This gentleman, who is of a mixed reputation, is particularly remarkable for a becoming assurance, which carries him gently through life; for, except Doctor Rock, none are more blessed with the advantages of face than Doctor Franks.

And yet the great have their foibles as well as the little. I am almost ashamed to mention it—let the foibles of the great rest in peace—yet I must impart the whole to my friend. These two great men are actually now at variance; yes, my dear Fum Hoam, by the head of our grandfather, they are now at variance like mere men, mere common mortals. The champion Rock advises the world to beware of bog-trotting quacks, while Franks retorts the wit and the sarcasm (for they have both a world of wit) by fixing on his rival the odious appellation of Dumplin Dick.[1] He calls the serious

[1] When these letters were written the contentions of Rock and Dick for employment furnished the public with occasional amusement. Franks cautioned the town by public advertisements against Rock: "Be not *Rocked* into eternity by that vain and impudent pretender, *Dumpling Dick*, who still lives at the gate of the inn where he was once porter." To which Rock rejoined: "If you would avoid destruction, avoid the Old Bailey; for there lives an old soldier discharged by the *beat of drum*, who has killed his thousands, but not in battle; his pills are much more fatal than were his *bullets*."

Doctor Rock, Dumplin Dick! Head of Confucius, what profanation! Dumplin Dick! What a pity, ye powers, that the learned, who were born mutually to assist in enlightening the world, should thus differ among themselves and make even the profession ridiculous! Sure the world is wide enough, at least, for two great personages to figure in. Men of science should leave controversy to the little world below them; and then we might see Rock and Franks walking together hand-in-hand, smiling onward to immortality.

Next to these is Doctor Walker, preparator of his own medicines. This gentleman is remarkable for an aversion to quacks; frequently cautioning the public to be careful into what hands they commit their safety; by which he would insinuate that if they do not employ him alone they must be undone. His public spirit is equal to his success. Not for himself, but his country, is the gallipot prepared, and the drops sealed up with proper directions, for any part of the town or country. All this is for his country's good; so that he is now grown old in the practice of physic and virtue; and, to use his own elegance of expression, "There is not such another medicine as his in the world again."

This, my friend, is a formidable triumvirate; and yet, formidable as they are, I am resolved to defend the honor of Chinese physic against them all. I have made a vow to summon Doctor Rock to a solemn disputation in all the mysteries of the profession before the face of every philomath, student in astrology, and member of the learned societies. I adhere to and venerate the doctrines of old Wang-shu-ho. In the very teeth of opposition I will maintain, "that the heart is the son of the liver, which has the kidneys for its mother, and the stomach for its wife."[1] I have, therefore, drawn up

[1] See Du Halde, vol. ii. fol. p. 185.—GOLDSMITH.—"A physician whom Dr. Abel saw at Canton was entirely destitute of anatomical knowledge. He appeared to be aware that there were such viscera as the heart, lungs, and liver, but had no notion of their real situation, or, like the Mock Doctor in Molière, placed them on the wrong sides of the body. The Chinese do not even know the distinction between arteries and veins, and not a syllable of the function of the lungs in oxygenizing the blood and getting rid of its superfluous carbon. Of the existence of certain sympathies between the different viscera, and of derangement being commu-

a disputation challenge, which is to be sent speedily, to this effect:

"I, Lien Chi Altangi, D.N.R.P., native of Honan, in China, to Richard Rock, F.U.N., native of Garbage Alley, in Wapping, *defiance*.—Though, sir, I am perfectly sensible of your importance, though no stranger to your studies in the paths of nature, yet there may be many things in the art of physic with which you are yet unacquainted. I know full well a doctor thou art, great Rock, and so am I. Wherefore, I challenge, and do hereby invite you to a trial of learning upon hard problems and knotty physical points. In this debate we will calmly investigate the whole theory and practice of medicine, botany, and chemistry; and I invite all the philomaths, with many of the lecturers in medicine, to be present at the dispute; which, I hope, will be carried on with due decorum, with proper gravity, and as befits men of erudition and science among each other. But, before we meet face to face, I would thus publicly, and in the face of the whole world, desire you to answer me one question; I ask it with the same earnestness with which you have often solicited the public; answer me, I say, at once, without having recourse to your physical dictionary, which of those three disorders incident to the human body is the most fatal, the syncope, parenthesis, or apoplexy? I beg your reply may be as public as this my demand.[1] I am, as hereafter may be, your admirer or your rival." Adieu.

nicated to one by the disorders of another, they might seem to have some glimmering, and to express it strangely by calling the heart 'the husband,' and the lungs 'the wife,' etc."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. ii. p. 284.

[1] The day after this was published the editor received an answer, in which the Doctor seems to be of opinion that the apoplexy is most fatal.—GOLDSMITH.

LETTER LXIX.[1]

THE FEAR OF MAD DOGS RIDICULED.

To the Same.

INDULGENT nature seems to have exempted this island from many of those epidemic evils which are so fatal in other parts of the world. A want of rain but for a few days beyond the expected season in China spreads famine, desolation, and terror over the whole country [the winds that blow from the brown bosom of the Western Desert are impregnated with death in every gale[2]]; but in this fortunate land of Britain the inhabitant courts health in every breeze, and the husbandman ever sows in joyful expectation.

But though the nation be exempt from real evils, think not, my friend, that it is more happy on this account than others. They are afflicted, it is true, with neither famine nor pestilence, but then there is a disorder peculiar to the country, which every season makes strange ravages among them; it spreads with pestilential rapidity, and infects almost every rank of people; what is still more strange, the natives have no name for this peculiar malady, though well known to foreign physicians by the appellation of *epidemic terror*.

A season is never known to pass in which the people are not visited by this cruel calamity in one shape or another, seemingly different though ever the same: one year it issues from a baker's shop in the shape of a sixpenny loaf; the next it takes the appearance of a comet with a fiery tail; a third, it threatens like a flat-bottomed boat; and a fourth, it carries consternation at the bite of a mad dog. The people, when once infected, lose their relish for happiness, saunter

[1] Reprinted by its author in 1765, with verbal alterations, as Essay XIII.

[2] The words in brackets are not in Essay XIII.

about with looks of despondence, ask after the calamities of the day, and receive no comfort but in heightening each other's distress. It is insignificant how remote or near, how weak or powerful the object of terror may be, when once they resolve to fright and be frightened; the merest trifles sow consternation and dismay; each proportions his fears, not to the object, but to the dread he discovers in the countenance of others; for when once the fermentation is begun it goes on of itself, though the original cause be discontinued which first set it in motion.

A dread of mad dogs is the *epidemic terror* which now prevails; and the whole nation is at present actually groaning under the malignity of its influence. The people sally from their houses with that circumspection which is prudent in such as expect a mad dog at every turning. The physician publishes his prescription, the beadle prepares his halter, and a few of unusual bravery arm themselves with boots and buff gloves, in order to face the enemy if he should offer to attack them. In short, the whole people stand bravely upon their defence, and seem by their present spirit to show a resolution of not being tamely bit by mad dogs any longer.

Their manner of knowing whether a dog be mad or no somewhat resembles the ancient European custom of trying witches. The old woman suspected was tied hand and foot, and thrown into the water. If she swum, then she was instantly carried off to be burnt for a witch; if she sunk, then indeed she was acquitted of the charge, but drowned in the experiment. In the same manner a crowd gather round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side; if he attempts to stand upon the defensive and bite, then he is unanimously found guilty, for "a mad dog always snaps at everything;" if, on the contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, "for mad dogs always run straight forward before them."

It is pleasant enough for a neutral being like me, who have no share in these ideal calamities, to mark the stages of this national disease. The terror at first feebly enters with a dis-

regarded story of a little dog, that had gone through a neighboring village, that was thought to be mad by several that had seen him. The next account comes, that a mastiff ran through a certain town, and had bit five geese, which immediately ran mad, foamed at the bill, and died in great agonies soon after. Then comes an affecting history of a little boy bit in the leg, and gone down to be dipped in the salt-water. When the people have sufficiently shuddered at that, they are next congealed with a frightful account of a man who was said lately to have died from a bite he had received some years before. This relation only prepares the way for another still more hideous, as how the master of a family, with seven small children, were all bit by a mad lapdog; and how the poor father first perceived the infection by calling for a draught of water, where he saw the lapdog swimming in the cup.

When epidemic terror is thus once excited, every morning comes loaded with some new disaster. As in stories of ghosts, each loves to hear the account, though it only serves to make him uneasy, so here each listens with eagerness, and adds to the tidings new circumstances of peculiar horror. A lady, for instance, in the country, of very weak nerves has been frightened by the barking of a dog; and this, alas! too frequently happens. The story soon is improved and spreads that a mad dog had frightened a lady of distinction. These circumstances begin to grow terrible before they have reached the neighboring village, and there the report is that a lady of quality was bit by a mad mastiff. This account every moment gathers new strength, and grows more dismal as it approaches the capital; and by the time it has arrived in town the lady is described, with wild eyes, foaming mouth, running mad upon all-fours, barking like a dog, biting her servants, and at last smothered between two beds by the advice of her doctors; while the mad mastiff is in the mean time ranging the whole country over, slavering at the mouth and seeking whom he may devour.

My landlady, a good-natured woman, but a little credulous, waked me some mornings ago before the usual hour, with horror and astonishment in her looks. She desired me, if I had

take no notice: mind your own business; stay where you are, and secure all you can get, without stirring. When you hear that your neighbor has picked up a purse of gold in the street, never run out into the same street looking about you in order to pick up such another; or when you are informed that he has made a fortune in one branch of business, never change your own in order to be his rival. Do not desire to be rich all at once, but patiently add farthing to farthing. Perhaps you despise the petty sum; and yet they who want a farthing, and have no friend that will lend them it, think farthings very good things. Whang, the foolish miller, when he wanted a farthing in his distress, found that no friend would lend, because they knew he wanted. Did you ever read the story of Whang in our books of Chinese learning—he who, despising small sums, and grasping at all, lost even what he had?

Whang, the miller, was naturally avaricious; nobody loved money better than he, or more respected those that had it. When people would talk of a rich man in company, Whang would say, I know him very well; he and I have been long acquainted; he and I are intimate; he stood for a child of mine. But if ever a poor man was mentioned, he had not the least knowledge of the man; he might be very well for aught he knew; but he was not fond of many acquaintances, and loved to choose his company.

Whang, however, with all his eagerness for riches, was in reality poor; he had nothing but the profits of his mill to support him; but though these were small, they were certain: while his mill stood and went he was sure of eating; and his frugality was such that he every day laid some money by, which he would at intervals count and contemplate with much satisfaction. Yet still his acquisitions were not equal to his desires; he only found himself above want, whereas he desired to be possessed of affluence.

One day, as he was indulging these wishes, he was informed that a neighbor of his had found a pan of money underground, having dreamed of it three nights running before. These tidings were daggers to the heart of poor Whang.

"Here am I," says he, "toiling and moiling from morning till night for a few paltry farthings, while neighbor Hunks only goes quietly to bed and dreams himself into thousands before morning. Oh that I could dream like him! With what pleasure would I dig round the pan; how slyly would I carry it home; not even my wife should see me: and then, oh the pleasure of thrusting one's hand into a heap of gold up to the elbow!"

Such reflections only served to make the miller unhappy: he discontinued his former assiduity; he was quite disgusted with small gains, and his customers began to forsake him. Every day he repeated the wish, and every night laid himself down in order to dream. Fortune, that was for a long time unkind, at last, however, seemed to smile upon his distresses, and indulged him with the wished-for vision. He dreamed that under a certain part of the foundation of his mill there was concealed a monstrous pan of gold and diamonds, buried deep in the ground, and covered with a large flat stone. He rose up, thanked the stars, that were at last pleased to take pity on his sufferings, and concealed his good luck from every person, as is usual in money dreams, in order to have the vision repeated the two succeeding nights, by which he should be certain of its veracity. His wishes in this also were answered: he still dreamed of the same pan of money, in the very same place.

Now, therefore, it was past a doubt; so, getting up early the third morning, he repairs alone, with a mattock in his hand, to the mill, and began to undermine that part of the wall to which the vision directed. The first omen of success that he met was a broken mug; digging still deeper, he turns up a house-tile, quite new and entire. At last, after much digging, he came to the broad flat stone, but then so large that it was beyond one man's strength to remove it. "Here," cried he in raptures to himself, "here it is! under this stone there is room for a very large pan of diamonds indeed. I must e'en go home to my wife and tell her the whole affair, and get her to assist me in turning it up." Away therefore he goes, and acquaints his wife with every circumstance of

fucius," cried I to my friend, "this is fine! this unites rural beauty with courtly magnificence. If we except the virgins of immortality that hang on every tree, and may be plucked at every desire, I do not see how this falls short of Mohammed's paradise!"[1] "As for virgins," cries my friend, "it is true they are a fruit that do not much abound in our gardens here; but if ladies, as plenty as apples in autumn, and as complying as any houri of them all, can content you, I fancy we have no need to go to heaven for paradise."

I was going to second his remarks, when we were called to a consultation by Mr. Tibbs and the rest of the company, to know in what manner we were to lay out the evening to the greatest advantage. Mrs. Tibbs was for keeping the genteel walk of the garden, where, she observed, there was always the very best company; the widow, on the contrary, who came but once a season, was for securing a good standing-place to see the water-works, which she assured us would begin in less than an hour at farthest; a dispute, therefore, began, and as it was managed between two of very opposite characters, it threatened to grow more bitter at every reply. Mrs. Tibbs wondered how people could pretend to know the polite world who had received all their rudiments of breeding behind a counter; to which the other replied that, though some people sat behind counters, yet they could sit at the head of their own tables too, and carve three good dishes of hot meat whenever they thought proper; which was more than some people could say for themselves, that hardly knew a rabbit and onions from a green goose and gooseberries.

It is hard to say where this might have ended, had not the

ing shrubs. Some terminate by paintings representing ruins of buildings, others a prospect of a distant country, and some of triumphal arches. There are several statues, particularly a good one in marble, by Roubiliac, of Handel in the character of Orpheus, playing on a lyre."—DODSLEY'S *London*, 1760. The price of admission at this time was one shilling.

[1] "We were now arrived at Spring Garden [Vauxhall], which is exquisitely pleasant at this time of the year. When I consider the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choir of birds that sung upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, I could not but look on the place as a kind of Mohammedan paradise."—ADDISON, *The Spectator*, No. 383.

husband, who probably knew the impetuosity of his wife's disposition, proposed to end the dispute by adjourning to a box, and try if there was anything to be had for supper that was supportable. To this we all consented; but here a new distress arose: Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs would sit in none but a genteel box, a box where they might see and be seen—one, as they expressed it, in the very focus of public view; but such a box was not easy to be obtained; for though we were perfectly convinced of our own gentility and the gentility of our appearance, yet we found it a difficult matter to persuade the keepers of the boxes to be of our opinion: they chose to reserve genteel boxes for what they judged more genteel company.

At last, however, we were fixed, though somewhat obscurely, and supplied with the usual entertainment of the place. The widow found the supper excellent, but Mrs. Tibbs thought everything detestable. "Come, come, my dear," cries the husband, by way of consolation, "to be sure we can't find such dressing here as we have at Lord Crump's, or Lady Crimp's; but for Vauxhall dressing it is pretty good; it is not their victuals, indeed, I find fault with, but their wine; their wine," cries he, drinking off a glass, "indeed, is most abominable."

By this last contradiction the widow was fairly conquered in point of politeness. She perceived now that she had no pretensions in the world to taste; her very senses were vulgar, since she had praised detestable custard and smacked at wretched wine; she was therefore content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve. It is true, she would now and then forget herself, and confess she was pleased, but they soon brought her back again to miserable refinement. She once praised the painting of the box in which we were sitting, but was soon convinced that such paltry pieces ought rather to excite horror than satisfaction; she ventured again to commend one of the singers, but Mrs. Tibbs soon let her know, in the style of a connoisseur, that the singer in question had neither ear, voice, nor judgment.

Mr. Tibbs, now willing to prove that his wife's pretensions to music were just, entreated her to favor the company with

a song; but to this she gave a positive denial: "For you know very well, my dear," says she, "that I am not in voice to-day, and when one's voice is not equal to one's judgment what signifies singing? Besides, as there is no accompaniment, it would be but spoiling music." All these excuses, however, were overruled by the rest of the company, who, though one would think they already had music enough, joined in the entreaty. But particularly the widow, now willing to convince the company of her breeding, pressed so warmly that she seemed determined to take no refusal. At last, then, the lady complied, and after humming for some minutes, began with such a voice and such affectation as I could perceive gave but little satisfaction to any except her husband. He sat with rapture in his eye, and beat time with his hand on the table.

You must observe, my friend, that it is the custom of this country, when a lady or gentleman happens to sing, for the company to sit as mute and motionless as statues. Every feature, every limb must seem to correspond in fixed attention; and while the song continues they are to remain in a state of universal petrifaction. In this mortifying situation we had continued for some time, listening to the song and looking with tranquillity, when the master of the box came to inform us that the water-works were going to begin. At this information I could instantly perceive the widow bounce from her seat; but, correcting herself, she sat down again, repressed by motives of good-breeding. Mrs. Tibbs, who had seen the water-works a hundred times, resolving not to be interrupted, continued her song without any share of mercy, nor had the smallest pity on our impatience. The widow's face, I own, gave me high entertainment; in it I could plainly read the struggle she felt between good-breeding and curiosity; she talked of the water-works the whole evening before, and seemed to have come merely in order to see them; but then she could not bounce out in the very middle of a song, for that would be forfeiting all pretensions to high life or high-lived company ever after. Mrs. Tibbs, therefore, kept on singing, and we continued to listen, till at last, when the

song was just concluded, the waiter came to inform us that the water-works were over.

"The water-works over!" cried the widow; "the water-works over already! that's impossible; they can't be over so soon!" "It is not my business," replied the fellow, "to contradict your ladyship; I'll run again and see." He went, and soon returned with a confirmation of the dismal tidings. No ceremony could now bind my friend's disappointed mistress; she testified her displeasure in the openest manner; in short, she now began to find fault in turn, and at last insisted upon going home just at the time that Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs assured the company that the polite hours were going to begin, and that the ladies would instantaneously be entertained with the horns. Adieu.

LETTER LXXII.

THE MARRIAGE ACT CENSURED.

From the Same.

Not far from the city lives a poor tinker, who has educated seven sons, all at this very time in arms and fighting for their country; and what reward, do you think, has the tinker from the state for such important services? None in the world; his sons, when the war is over, may probably be whipped from parish to parish as vagabonds, and the old man, when past labor, may die a prisoner in some house of correction.

Such a worthy subject in China would be held in universal reverence; his services would be rewarded, if not with dignities, at least with an exemption from labor; he would take the left hand at feasts, and mandarins themselves would be proud to show their submission. The English laws punish vice; the Chinese laws do more, they reward virtue.

Considering the little encouragement given to matrimony here, I am not surprised at the discouragements given to propagation. Would you believe it, my dear Fum Hoam, there are laws made which even forbid the people's marrying

each other! By the head of Confucius, I jest not; there are such laws in being here; and yet their law-givers have neither been instructed among the Hottentots, nor imbibed their principles of equity from the natives of Anamaboe.

There are laws which ordain that no man shall marry a woman against her own consent. This, though contrary to what we are taught in Asia, and though in some measure a clog upon matrimony, I have no great objection to. There are laws which ordain that no woman shall marry against her father and mother's consent, unless arrived at an age of maturity; by which is understood those years when women with us are generally past child-bearing. This must be a clog upon matrimony, as it is more difficult for the lover to please three than one, and much more difficult to please old people than young ones. The laws ordain that the consenting couple shall take a long time to consider before they marry; this is a very great clog, because people love to have all rash actions done in a hurry. It is ordained that all marriages shall be proclaimed before celebration. This is a severe clog, as many are ashamed to have their marriage made public from motives of vicious modesty, and many afraid from views of temporal interest. It is ordained that there is nothing sacred in the ceremony, but that it may be dissolved, to all intents and purposes, by the authority of any civil magistrate. And yet, opposite to this, it is ordained that the priest shall be paid a large sum of money for granting his sacred permission.

Thus you see, my friend, that matrimony here is hedged round with so many obstructions that those who are willing to break through or surmount them must be contented if at last they find it a bed of thorns. The laws are not to blame, for they have deterred the people from engaging as much as they could. It is, indeed, become a very serious affair in England, and none but serious people are generally found willing to engage. The young, the gay, and the beautiful, who have motives of passion only to induce them, are seldom found to embark, as those inducements are taken away; and none but the old, the ugly, and the mercenary are seen to

unite, who, if they have any posterity at all, will probably be an ill-favored race like themselves.

What gave rise to those laws might have been some such accidents as these: It sometimes happened that a miser, who had spent all his youth in scraping up money to give his daughter such a fortune as might get her a mandarin husband, found his expectations disappointed at last by her running away with his footman. This must have been a sad shock to the poor, disconsolate parent, to see his poor daughter in a one-horse chaise, when he had designed her for a coach-and-six. What a stroke from Providence! to see his dear money go to enrich a beggar! All nature cried out at the profanation.

It sometimes happened, also, that a lady, who had inherited all the titles and all the nervous complaints of nobility, thought fit to impair her dignity and mend her constitution by marrying a farmer. This must have been a sad shock to her inconsolable relations, to see so fine a flower snatched from a flourishing family and planted in a dunghill; this was an absolute inversion of the first principles of things.

In order, therefore, to prevent the great from being thus contaminated by vulgar alliances, the obstacles to matrimony have been so contrived that the rich only can marry among the rich, and the poor, who would leave celibacy, must be content to increase their poverty with a wife. Thus have their laws fairly inverted the inducements to matrimony. Nature tells us that beauty is the proper allurement of those who are rich, and money of those who are poor; but things here are so contrived that the rich are invited to marry by that fortune which they do not want, and the poor have no inducement but that beauty which they do not feel.

An equal diffusion of riches through any country ever constitutes its happiness. Great wealth in the possession of one stagnates, and extreme poverty with another keeps him in unambitious indigence; but the moderately rich are generally active: not too far removed from poverty to fear its calamities, nor too near extreme wealth to slacken the nerve of labor, they remain still between both in a state of continual

fluctuation. How impolitic, therefore, are those laws which promote the accumulation of wealth among the rich; more impolitic still, in attempting to increase the depression on poverty.

Bacon, the English philosopher, compares money to manure. "If gathered in heaps," says he, "it does no good; on the contrary, it becomes offensive; but being spread, though never so thinly, over the surface of the earth, it enriches the whole country." Thus, the wealth a nation possesses must expatiate, or it is of no benefit to the public; it becomes rather a grievance, where matrimonial laws thus confine it to a few.

But this restraint upon matrimonial community, even considered in a physical light, is injurious. As those who rear up animals take all possible pains to cross the strain in order to improve the breed, so in those countries where marriage is most free, the inhabitants are found every age to improve in stature and in beauty; on the contrary, where it is confined to a caste, a tribe, or a horde, as among the Giaours, the Jews, or the Tartars, each division soon assumes a family likeness, and every tribe degenerates into peculiar deformity. Hence it may be easily inferred that if the mandarins here are resolved only to marry among each other, they will soon produce a posterity with mandarin faces; and we shall see the heir of some honorable family scarce equal to the abortion of a country farmer.

These are a few of the obstacles to marriage here; and it is certain they have in some measure answered the end, for celibacy is both frequent and fashionable. Old bachelors appear abroad without a mask, and old maids, my dear Fum Hoam, have been absolutely known to ogle. To confess in friendship, if I were an Englishman, I fancy I should be an old bachelor myself; I should never find courage to run through all the adventures prescribed by the law. I could submit to court my mistress herself upon reasonable terms; but to court her father, her mother, and a long tribe of cousins, aunts, and relations, and then stand the butt of a whole country church! I would as soon turn tail and make love to her grandmother.

Richelieu

ments have brought no real felicity; and sensation assures me that those I have felt are stronger than those which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade; hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in fancied beauty, some happiness in long perspective still beckons me to pursue, and, like a losing gamester, every new disappointment increases my ardor to continue the game.

Whence, my friend, this increased love of life, which grows upon us with our years? whence comes it that we thus make greater efforts to preserve our existence at a period when it becomes scarce worth the keeping? Is it that Nature, attentive to the preservation of mankind, increases our wishes to live while she lessens our enjoyments; and, as she robs the senses of every pleasure, equips imagination in the spoil? Life would be insupportable to an old man who, loaded with infirmities, feared death no more than when in the vigor of manhood; the numberless calamities of decaying nature, and the consciousness of surviving every pleasure, would at once induce him, with his own hand, to terminate the scene of misery; but happily the contempt of death forsakes him at a time when it could only be prejudicial; and life acquires an imaginary value, in proportion as its real value is no more.

Our attachment to every object around us increases, in general, from the length of our acquaintance with it. "I would not choose," says a French philosopher, "to see an old post pulled up with which I had been long acquainted." A mind long habituated to a certain set of objects insensibly becomes fond of seeing them; visits them from habit, and parts from them with reluctance:[1] from hence proceeds the avarice of the old in every kind of possession. They love the world and

[1] When Cardinal Richelieu built his magnificent palace on the site of the old family château at Richelieu, he sacrificed its symmetry to preserve the room in which he was born. (See *Mém. de Montpensier*, t. i. p. 27.) When the Duke of Lenox wished to buy, or obtain by exchange, York House, in the Strand, Lord Bacon, to whom it belonged, replied: "For this you will pardon me; York House still is the house where my father died, and where I first breathed, and there will I yield my last breath, if so please God and the king.—See CUNNINGHAM'S *Hand-Book of London*, ed. 1850, p. 560.

all that it produces; they love life and all its advantages; not because it gives them pleasure, but because they have known it long.

Chinvang the Chaste, ascending the throne of China, commanded that all who were unjustly detained in prison during the preceding reigns should be set free. Among the number who came to thank their deliverer on this occasion there appeared a majestic old man, who, falling at the emperor's feet, addressed him as follows: "Great father of China, behold a wretch now eighty-five years old, who was shut up in a dungeon at the age of twenty-two. I was imprisoned, though a stranger to crime, or without being even confronted by my accusers. I have now lived in solitude and in darkness for more than fifty years, and am grown familiar with distress. As yet, dazzled with the splendor of that sun to which you have restored me, I have been wandering the streets to find some friend that would assist, or relieve, or remember me; but my friends, my family, and relations are all dead, and I am forgotten. Permit me, then, O Chinvang, to wear out the wretched remains of life in my former prison: the walls of my dungeon are to me more pleasing than the most splendid palace; I have not long to live, and shall be unhappy except I spend the rest of my days where my youth was passed—in that prison from whence you were pleased to release me."

The old man's passion for confinement is similar to that we all have for life. We are habituated to the prison; we look round with discontent, are displeased with the abode, and yet the length of our captivity only increases our fondness for the cell. The trees we have planted, the houses we have built, or the posterity we have begotten, all serve to bind us closer to earth, and embitter our parting. Life sues the young like a new acquaintance: the companion, as yet unexhausted, is at once instructive and amusing; its company pleases; yet, for all this, it is but little regarded. To us, who are declined in years, life appears like an old friend; its jests have been anticipated in former conversation; it has no new story to make us smile, no new improvement with which to surprise: yet still we love it: destitute of every agreement, still we love it,

husband the wasting treasure with increased frugality, and feel all the poignancy of anguish in the fatal separation.[1]

Sir Philip Mordaunt was young, beautiful, sincere, brave, an Englishman. He had a complete fortune of his own, and the love of the king his master, which was equivalent to riches. Life opened all her treasure before him, and promised a long succession of future happiness. He came, tasted of the entertainment, but was disgusted even in the beginning. He professed an aversion to living; was tired of walking round the same circle; had tried every enjoyment, and found them all grow weaker at every repetition. "If life be in youth so displeasing," cried he to himself, "what will it appear when age comes on? if it be at present indifferent, sure it will then be execrable." This thought embittered every reflection; till at last, with all the serenity of perverted reason, he ended the debate with a pistol! Had this self-deluded man been apprised that existence grows more desirable to us the longer we exist, he would have then faced old age without shrinking; he would have boldly dared to live, and served that society by his future assiduity which he basely injured by his desertion. Adieu.

[1] "I have heard Mr. Burke make use of a very ingenious and plausible argument on this subject: 'Every man,' said he, 'would lead his life over again; for every man is willing to go on and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded.' I imagine, however, the truth is that there is a deceitful hope that the next part of life will be free from the pains, and anxieties, and sorrows which we have already felt. We are for wise purposes 'condemned to Hope's delusive mine,' as Johnson finely says; and I may also quote the celebrated lines of Dryden, equally philosophical and poetical:

"'When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favor the deceit—
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and, while it says we shall be blessed
With some new joys, cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.'"

BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson*, ed. Croker, p. 764.

LETTER LXXIV.

THE DESCRIPTION OF A LITTLE GREAT MAN.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

In reading the newspapers here, I have reckoned up not less than twenty-five great men, seventeen very great men, and nine very extraordinary men, in less than the compass of half a year. "These," say the gazettes, "are the men that posterity are to gaze at with admiration; these the names that fame will be employed in holding up for the astonishment of succeeding ages." Let me see—forty-six great men in half a year amount just to ninety-two in a year. I wonder how posterity will be able to remember them all, or whether the people, in future times, will have any other business to mind but that of getting the catalogue by heart?

Does the mayor of a corporation make a speech? he is instantly set down for a great man. Does a pedant digest his commonplace-book into a folio? he quickly becomes great. Does a poet string up trite sentiments in rhyme? he also becomes the great man of the hour. How diminutive soever the object of admiration, each is followed by a crowd of still more diminutive admirers. The shout begins in his train; onward he marches toward immortality; looks back at the pursuing crowd with self-satisfaction—catching all the oddities, the whimsies, the absurdities, and the littlenesses of conscious greatness by the way.

I was yesterday invited by a gentleman to dinner, who promised that our entertainment should consist of a haunch of venison, a turtle, and a great man. I came according to appointment. The venison was fine, the turtle good, but the great man insupportable. The moment I ventured to speak I was at once contradicted with a snap. I attempted by a

second and a third assault to retrieve my lost reputation, but was still beat back with confusion. I was resolved to attack him once more from intrenchment, and turned the conversation upon the government of China; but even here he asserted, snapped, and contradicted as before. "Heavens," thought I, "this man pretends to know China even better than myself!" I looked round to see who was on my side, but every eye was fixed in admiration on the great man; I therefore at last thought proper to sit silent, and act the pretty gentleman during the ensuing conversation.

When a man has once secured a circle of admirers he may be as ridiculous here as he thinks proper; and it all passes for elevation of sentiment or learned absence. If he transgresses the common forms of breeding, mistakes even a teapot for a tobacco-box, it is said that his thoughts are fixed on more important objects; to speak and to act like the rest of mankind is to be no greater than they. There is something of oddity in the very idea of greatness; for we are seldom astonished at a thing very much resembling ourselves.

When the Tartars make a Lama, their first care is to place him in a dark corner of the temple; here he is to sit half-concealed from view, to regulate the motion of his hands, lips, and eyes; but, above all, he is enjoined gravity and silence. This, however, is but the prelude to his apotheosis; a set of emissaries are despatched among the people to cry up his piety, gravity, and love of raw flesh; the people take them at their word, approach the Lama, now become an idol, with the most humble prostration. He receives their addresses without motion, commences a god, and is ever after fed by his priests with the spoon of immortality. The same receipt in this country serves to make a great man. The idol only keeps close, sends out his little emissaries to be hearty in his praise; and straight, whether statesman or author, he is set down in the list of fame, continuing to be praised while it is fashionable to praise, or while he prudently keeps his minuteness concealed from the public.

I have visited many countries, and have been in cities without number, yet never did I enter a town which could not

produce ten or twelve of those little great men; all fancying themselves known to the rest of the world, and complimenting each other upon their extensive reputation. It is amusing enough when two of those domestic prodigies of learning mount the stage of ceremony, and give and take praise from each other. I have been present when a German doctor, for having pronounced a panegyric upon a certain monk, was thought the most ingenious man in the world; till the monk soon after divided this reputation by returning the compliment; by which means they both marched off with universal applause.

The same degree of undeserved adulation that attends our great man while living often also follows him to the tomb. It frequently happens that one of his little admirers sits down big with the important subject, and is delivered of the history of his life and writings. This may probably be called the revolutions of a life between the fireside and the easy-chair. In this we learn the year in which he was born, at what an early age he gave symptoms of uncommon genius and application, together with some of his smart sayings, collected by his aunt and mother, while yet but a boy. The next book introduces him to the university, where we are informed of his amazing progress in learning, his excellent skill in darning stockings, and his new invention for papering books to save the covers. He next makes his appearance in the republic of letters, and publishes his folio. Now the colossus is reared, his works are eagerly bought up by all the purchasers of scarce books. The learned societies invite him to become a member; he disputes against some foreigner with a long Latin name, conquers in the controversy, is complimented by several authors of gravity and importance, is excessively fond of egg-sauce with his pig, becomes president of a literary club, and dies in the meridian of his glory. Happy they who thus have some little faithful attendant, who never forsakes them, but prepares to wrangle and to praise against every opposer; at once ready to increase their pride while living, and their character when dead. For you and I, my friend, who have no humble admirer thus to attend us, we,

was carried to the highest pitch, have missed that fame and immortality which they had fondly arrogated to themselves! How many Greek authors, who wrote at that period when Constantinople was the refined mistress of the empire, now rest, either not printed or not read, in the libraries of Europe! Those who came first, while either state as yet was barbarous, carried all the reputation away. Authors, as the age refined, became more numerous, and their numbers destroyed their fame. It is but natural, therefore, for the writer, when conscious that his works will not produce him fame hereafter, to endeavor to make them turn out to his temporal interest here.

Whatever be the motives which induce men to write, whether avarice or fame, the country becomes most wise and happy in which they most serve for instructors. The countries where sacerdotal instruction alone is permitted remain in ignorance, superstition, and hopeless slavery. In England, where there are as many new books published as in all the rest of Europe together, a spirit of freedom and reason reigns among the people: they have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men.

The only danger that attends a multiplicity of publications is that some of them may be calculated to injure rather than benefit society. But where writers are numerous, they also serve as a check upon each other; and perhaps a literary inquisition is the most terrible punishment that can be conceived to a literary transgressor.

But, to do the English justice, there are but few offenders of this kind; their publications in general aim at mending either the heart or improving the common weal. The dullest writer talks of virtue, and liberty, and benevolence with esteem; tells his true story, filled with good and wholesome advice; warns against slavery, bribery, or the bite of a mad dog; and dresses up his little useful magazine of knowledge and entertainment at least with a good intention. The dunces of France, on the other hand, who have less encouragement, are more vicious. Tender hearts, languishing eyes, Leonora in love at thirteen, ecstatic transports, stolen blisses,

are the frivolous subjects of their frivolous memoirs. In England, if a bawdy blockhead thus breaks in on the community, he sets his whole fraternity in a roar; nor can he escape, even though he should fly to nobility for shelter.

Thus even dunces, my friend, may make themselves useful. But there are others whom nature has blessed with talents above the rest of mankind: men capable of thinking with precision and impressing their thoughts with rapidity; beings who diffuse those regards upon mankind which others contract and settle upon themselves. These deserve every honor from that community of which they are more peculiarly the children; to such I would give my heart, since to them I am indebted for its humanity! Adieu.

LETTER LXXVI.

THE PREFERENCE OF GRACE TO BEAUTY: AN ALLEGORY.

From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi, by the way of Moscow.

I STILL remain at Terki, where I have received that money which was remitted here in order to release me from captivity. My fair companion still improves in my esteem; the more I know her mind, her beauty becomes more poignant: she appears charming, even among the daughters of Circassia.

Yet, were I to examine her beauty with the art of a statuary, I should find numbers here that far surpass her: nature has not granted her all the boasted Circassian regularity of feature, and yet she greatly exceeds the fairest of the country in the art of seizing the affections. "Whence," have I often said to myself, "this resistless magic that attends even moderate charms? Though I regard the beauties of the country with admiration, every interview weakens the impression, but the form of Zelis grows upon my imagination; I never behold her without an increase of tenderness and respect. Whence this injustice of the mind, in preferring imperfect beauty to that which Nature seems to have finished with care? Whence the infatuation that he whom a comet could not

amaze should be astonished at a meteor?" When reason was thus fatigued to find an answer, my imagination pursued the subject, and this was the result:

I fancied myself placed between two landscapes—this called the Region of Beauty, and that the Valley of the Graces. The one was adorned with all that luxuriant nature could bestow: the fruits of various climates adorned the trees, the grove resounded with music, the gale breathed perfume, every charm that could arise from symmetry and exact distribution was here conspicuous, the whole offering a prospect of pleasure without end. The Valley of the Graces, on the other hand, seemed by no means so inviting; the streams and the groves appeared just as they usually do in frequented countries: no magnificent parterres, no concert in the grove; the rivulet was edged with weeds, and the rook joined its voice to that of the nightingale. All was simplicity and nature.

The most striking objects ever first allure the traveller. I entered the Region of Beauty with increased curiosity, and promised myself endless satisfaction in being introduced to the presiding goddess. I perceived several strangers, who entered with the same design; and what surprised me not a little was to see several others hastening to leave this abode of seeming felicity.

After some fatigue, I had at last the honor of being introduced to the goddess who represented Beauty in person. She was seated on a throne, at the foot of which stood several strangers, lately introduced like me, all regarding her form in ecstasy. "Ah, what eyes! what lips! how clear her complexion! how perfect her shape!" At these exclamations Beauty, with downcast eyes, would endeavor to counterfeit modesty, but soon again looking round, as if to confirm every spectator in his favorable sentiments: sometimes she would attempt to allure us by smiles; and at intervals would bridle back, in order to inspire us with respect as well as tenderness.

This ceremony lasted for some time, and had so much employed our eyes that we had forgot all this while that the goddess was silent. We soon, however, began to perceive the defect. "What!" said we among each other, "are we to have

nothing but languishing airs, soft looks, and inclinations of the head? will the goddess only deign to satisfy our eyes?" Upon this one of the company stepped up to present her with some fruits he had gathered by the way. She received the present most sweetly smiling, and with one of the whitest hands in the world, but still not a word escaped her lips.

I now found that my companions grew weary of their homage; they went off one by one, and, resolving not to be left behind, I offered to go in my turn; when, just at the door of the temple, I was called back by a female whose name was Pride, and who seemed displeased at the behavior of the company. "Where are you hastening?" said she to me, with an angry air; "the Goddess of Beauty is here." "I have been to visit her, madam," replied I, "and find her more beautiful even than report had made her." "And why, then, will you leave her?" added the female. "I have seen her long enough," returned I; "I have got all her features by heart. Her eyes are still the same. Her nose is a very fine one, but it is such a nose now as it was half an hour ago: could she throw a little more mind into her face, perhaps I should be for wishing to have more of her company." "What signifies," replied my female, "whether she has a mind or not? has she any occasion for a mind, so formed as she is by nature? If she had a common face, indeed, there might be some reason for thinking to improve it; but when features are already perfect every alteration would but impair them. A fine face is already at the point of perfection, and a fine lady should endeavor to keep it so: the impression it would receive from thought would but disturb its whole economy."

To this speech I gave no reply, but made the best of my way to the Valley of the Graces. Here I found all those who before had been my companions in the Region of Beauty, now upon the same errand.

As we entered the valley the prospect insensibly seemed to improve; we found everything so natural, so domestic and pleasing, that our minds, which before were congealed in admiration, now relaxed into gayety and good-humor. We had designed to pay our respects to the presiding goddess, but she

was nowhere to be found. One of our companions asserted that her temple lay to the right; another, to the left; a third insisted that it was straight before us; and a fourth that we had left it behind. In short, we found everything familiar and charming, but could not determine where to seek for the Grace in person.

In this agreeable incertitude we passed several hours, and though very desirous of finding the goddess, by no means impatient of the delay. Every part of the valley presented some minute beauty, which, without offering itself, at once stole upon the soul, and captivated us with the charms of our retreat. Still, however, we continued to search, and might still have continued, had we not been interrupted by a voice which, though we could not see from whence it came, addressed us in this manner:

"If you would find the Goddess of Grace, seek her not under one form, for she assumes a thousand. Ever changing under the eye of inspection, her variety, rather than her figure, is pleasing. In contemplating her beauty, the eye glides over every perfection with giddy delight, and, capable of fixing nowhere, is charmed with the whole.[1] She is now Contemplation with solemn look, again Compassion with humid eye: she now sparkles with joy, soon every feature speaks distress; her looks at times invite our approach, at others repress our presumption. The goddess cannot be properly called beautiful under any one of these forms, but by combining them all she becomes irresistibly pleasing." Adieu.

[1] "Vultus nimium lubricus aspici."—*Hor.*—GOLDSMITH.

LETTER LXXVII.

THE BEHAVIOR OF A SHOPKEEPER AND HIS JOURNEYMAN.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy, at Pekin, in China.

THE shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door,[1] informing the passengers what they have to sell, as those at Pekin have a board to assure the buyer that they have no intention to cheat him.[2]

I was this morning to buy silk for a nightcap: immediately upon entering the mercer's shop, the master and his two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my commands. They were certainly the civilest people alive; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye; every motion of mine sent them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I wanted what was good, and they showed me not less than forty pieces, and each was better than the former, the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for nightcaps. "My very good friend," said I to the mercer, "you must not pretend to instruct me in silks; I know these in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy bungees." "That may be," cried the mercer, who I afterward found had never contradicted a man

[1] See Letter II., Vol. III. p. 96. The house or door signs of London were taken down in 1766.

[2] "By the side of each shop is suspended from on high a huge ornamental label of wood, varnished and gilded, on which are inscribed the particular calling of the tenant, and the goods in which he deals. The inscriptions in the shops are sometimes amusing, and at the same time highly characteristic of the keenness and industry of the people as traders. We have seen the following: 'Goods genuine, prices true.' 'Trade circling like a wheel,' etc. 'Former customers have inspired caution—no credit given.' 'A small stream always flowing,' etc."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. ii. p. 9.

in his life; "I cannot pretend to say but they may; but I can assure you my Lady Trail has had a sack from this piece this very morning." "But, friend," said I, "though my lady has chosen a sack from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a nightcap." "That may be," returned he again, "yet what becomes a pretty lady will at any time look well on a handsome gentleman." This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my ugly face, that, even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a nightcap.

While this business was consigned to his journeyman, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and spreading them before me, "There," cries he, "there's a beauty! my Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birth-night this very morning; it would look charmingly in waistcoats." "But I do not want a waistcoat," replied I. "Not want a waistcoat?" returned the mercer; "then I would advise you to buy one; when waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear. Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be well used, as they say in Cheapside." There was so much justice in his advice that I could not refuse taking it; besides, the silk, which was really a good one, increased the temptation; so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, which, I know not how, they executed but slowly, during the interval the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving company in their morning-gowns. "Perhaps, sir," adds he, "you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn?" Without waiting for my reply, he spreads a piece before me which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. "If the nobility," continues he, "were to know I sold this to any under a Right Honorable I should certainly lose their custom; you see, my lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing." "I am no lord," interrupted I. "I beg pardon," cried he; "but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning-gown, that you had an offer from me of something worth money. Con-

science, sir, conscience is my way of dealing: you may buy a morning-gown now, or you may stay till they become dearer and less fashionable; but it is not my business to advise." In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning-gown also, and would probably have persuaded me to have bought half the goods in his shop, if I had stayed long enough, or was furnished with sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting with some astonishment how this very man, with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper and moulding me to his inclinations. I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine; yet, by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion, compounded of vanity and good-nature, I walked into the snare with my eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigor, uniformity, and success. Adieu.

LETTER LXXVIII.

THE FRENCH RIDICULED AFTER THEIR OWN MANNER.

From the Same.

FROM my former accounts, you may be apt to fancy the English the most ridiculous people under the sun. They are indeed ridiculous; yet every other nation in Europe is equally so; each laughs at each, and the Asiatic at all.

I may, upon another occasion, point out what is most strikingly absurd in other countries; I shall, at present, confine myself only to France. The first national peculiarity a traveller meets upon entering that kingdom is an odd sort of a staring vivacity in every eye, not excepting even the children; the people, it seems, have got into their heads that they have more wit than others, and so stare in order to look smart.

I know not how it happens, but there appears a sickly delicacy in the faces of their finest women. This may have introduced the use of paint, and paint produces wrinkles; so that a fine lady shall look like a hag at twenty-three. But as, in some measure, they never appear young, so it may be equally asserted that they actually think themselves never old: a gentle miss shall prepare for new conquests at sixty, shall hobble a rigadoon when she can scarce walk out without a crutch; she shall affect the girl, play her fan and her eyes, and talk of sentiments, bleeding hearts, and expiring for love, when actually dying with age. Like a departing philosopher, she attempts to make her last moments the most brilliant of her life.

Their civility to strangers is what they are chiefly proud of; and, to confess sincerely, their beggars are the very politest beggars I ever knew: in other places a traveller is addressed with a piteous whine or a sturdy solemnity, but a French beggar shall ask your charity with a very genteel bow, and thank you for it with a smile and a shrug.

Another instance of this people's breeding I must not forget. An Englishman would not speak his native language in a company of foreigners, where he was sure that none understood him; a travelling Hottentot himself would be silent if acquainted only with the language of his country; but a Frenchman shall talk to you whether you understand his language or not; never troubling his head whether you have learned French, still he keeps up the conversation, fixes his eye full in your face, and asks a thousand questions, which he answers himself for want of a more satisfactory reply.

But their civility to foreigners is not half so great as their admiration of themselves. Everything that belongs to them and their nation is great, magnificent beyond expression, quite romantic; every garden is a paradise, every hovel a palace, and every woman an angel. They shut their eyes close, throw their mouths wide open, and cry out in rapture, "*Sacre!* what beauty! *O Ciel!* what taste! *mort de ma vie!* what grandeur! Was ever any people like ourselves? We are the nation of men, and all the rest no better than two-legged barbarians."

I fancy the French would make the best cooks in the world, if they had but meat; as it is, they can dress you out five different dishes from a nettle-top, seven from a dock-leaf, and twice as many from a frog's haunches; these eat prettily enough when one is a little used to them, are easy of digestion, and seldom overload the stomach with crudities. They seldom dine under seven hot dishes. It is true, indeed, with all this magnificence they seldom spread a cloth before the guests; but in that I cannot be angry with them, since those who have no linen on their backs may very well be excused for wanting it upon their tables.

Even religion itself loses its solemnity among them. Upon their roads, at about every five miles' distance, you see an image of the Virgin Mary, dressed up in grim head-cloths, painted cheeks, and an old red petticoat; before her a lamp is often kept burning, at which, with the saint's permission, I have frequently lighted my pipe. Instead of the Virgin, you are sometimes presented with a crucifix, at other times with a wooden Saviour, fitted out in complete garniture, with sponge, spear, nails, pincers, hammer, beeswax, and vinegar-bottle. Some of those images, I have been told, came down from heaven; if so, in heaven they have but bungling workmen.

In passing through their towns you frequently see the men sitting at the doors knitting stockings, while the care of cultivating the ground and pruning the vines falls to the women. This is, perhaps, the reason why the fair sex are granted some peculiar privileges in this country; particularly, when they can get horses, of riding without a side-saddle.

But I begin to think you may find this description pert and dull enough; perhaps it is so, yet in general it is the manner in which the French usually describe foreigners; and it is but just to force a part of that ridicule back upon them which they attempt to lavish on others. Adieu.

am quite dizzy before the performance is over. If I enter the house with any sentiments in my head, I am sure to have none going away; the whole mind being filled with a dead-march, a funeral procession, a cat-call, a jig, or a tempest.

There is, perhaps, nothing more easy than to write properly for the English theatre. I am amazed that none are apprenticed to the trade. The author, when well acquainted with the value of thunder and lightning; when versed in all the mystery of scene-shifting and trap-doors; when skilled in the proper periods to introduce a wire-walker or a water-fall; when instructed in every actor's peculiar talent, and capable of adapting his speeches to the supposed excellence; when thus instructed, he knows all that can give a modern audience pleasure. One player shines in an exclamation, another in a groan, a third in a horror, a fourth in a start, a fifth in a smile, a sixth faints, and a seventh fidgets round the stage with peculiar vivacity; that piece, therefore, will succeed best where each has a proper opportunity of shining: the actor's business is not so much to adapt himself to the poet as the poet's to adapt himself to the actor.

The great secret, therefore, of tragedy-writing at present is a perfect acquaintance with theatrical ah's and oh's; a certain number of these, interspersed with gods! tortures! rack! and damnation! shall distort every actor almost into convulsions, and draw tears from every spectator; a proper use of these will infallibly fill the whole house with applause. But, above all, a whining scene must strike most forcibly. I would advise, from my present knowledge of the audience, the two favorite players of the town to introduce a scene of this sort in every play. Toward the middle of the last act I would have them enter with wild looks and outspread arms: there is no necessity for speaking, they are only to groan at each other; they must vary the tones of exclamation and despair through the whole theatrical gamut, wring their figures into every shape of distress; and, when their calamities have drawn a proper quantity of tears from the sympathetic spectators, they may go off in dumb solemnity at different doors, clasping their hands or slapping their pocket-holes: this, which

may be called a tragic pantomime, will answer every purpose of moving the passions as well as words could have done, and it must save those expenses which go to reward an author.

All modern plays that would keep the audience alive must be conceived in this manner; and, indeed, many a modern play is made up on no other plan. This is the merit that lifts up the heart, like opium, into a rapture of insensibility, and can dismiss the mind from all the fatigue of thinking: this is the eloquence that shines in many a long-forgotten scene, which has been reckoned excessively fine upon acting; this the lightning that flashes no less in the hyperbolical tyrant, "who breakfasts on the wind," than in little Norval, "as harmless as the babe unborn." Adieu.

LETTER LXXX.

THE EVIL TENDENCY OF INCREASING PENAL LAWS, OR ENFORCING EVEN THOSE ALREADY IN BEING WITH RIGOR.

From the Same.

I HAVE always regarded the spirit of mercy which appears in the Chinese laws with admiration.[1] An order for the exe-

[1] "The most remarkable thing in the Chinese code is its great reasonableness, clearness, and consistency; the business-like brevity and directness of the various provisions, and the plainness and moderation of the language in which they are expressed. There is nothing here of the monstrous verbiage of most other Asiatic productions; none of the superstitious deliration, the miserable incoherence, the tremendous *non sequiturs* and eternal repetitions of those oracular performances; but a clear, concise, and distinct series of enactments, savoring throughout of practical judgment and European good-sense; and if not always conformable to our improved notions of expediency in this country, in general approaching to them more nearly than the codes of most other nations."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xvi. p. 481: critique on Sir George Staunton's "Leu Lee, or Penal Code of the Chinese."

"The edition of the penal code of China, circulated in a cheap form for the benefit of the public, is so concisely framed as to be comprehended in little more space than is occupied by one of our statutes. Indeed, the whole code does not contain two thousand different characters or words; so studious have the legislators of China been to simplify and adapt it to common capacities."—*Quarterly Review*, No. CXII. p. 504 (1836).

every criminal had his trial, and lost his life by a majority of witnesses.

And such will ever be the case where punishments are numerous, and where a weak, vicious, but above all, where a mercenary magistrate is concerned in their execution. Such a man desires to see penal laws increased, since he too frequently has it in his power to turn them into instruments of extortion; in such hands the more laws the wider means, not of satisfying justice, but of satiating avarice.

A mercenary magistrate, who is rewarded in proportion, not to his integrity, but to the number he convicts, must be a person of the most unblemished character, or he will lean on the side of cruelty; and when once the work of injustice is begun, it is impossible to tell how far it will proceed. It is said of the hyena that naturally it is no way ravenous, but when once it has tasted human flesh it becomes the most voracious animal of the forest, and continues to persecute mankind ever after. A corrupt magistrate may be considered as a human hyena; he begins, perhaps, by a private snap, he goes on to a morsel among friends, he proceeds to a meal in public, from a meal he advances to a surfeit, and at last sucks blood like a vampire.

Not into such hands should the administration of justice be intrusted, but to those who know how to reward as well as to punish. It was a fine saying of Nangfu, the emperor, who, being told that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of the distant provinces, "Come, then, my friend," said he, "follow me, and I promise you that we shall quickly destroy them." He marched forward, and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humanity. "How!" cries his first minister, "is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed, and behold you have pardoned all, and even caressed some!" "I promised," replied the emperor, with a generous air, "to *destroy* my enemies; I have fulfilled my word, for see, they are enemies no longer—I have made *friends* of them."

This, could it always succeed, were the true method of destroying the enemies of a state. Well it were if rewards and mercy alone could regulate the commonwealth; but since punishments are sometimes necessary, let them at least be rendered terrible by being executed but seldom, and let Justice lift her sword rather to terrify than revenge. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXI.

THE LADIES' TRAINS RIDICULED.

From the Same.

I HAVE as yet given you but a short and imperfect description of the ladies of England. Woman, my friend, is a subject not easily understood, even in China; what, therefore, can be expected from my knowledge of the sex, in a country where they are universally allowed to be riddles, and I but a stranger?

To confess a truth, I was afraid to begin the description, lest the sex should undergo some new revolution before it was finished, and my picture should thus become old before it could well be said to have ever been new. To-day they are lifted upon stilts, to-morrow they lower their heels and raise their heads; their clothes at one time are bloated out with whalebone; at present they have laid their hoops aside, and are become as slim as mermaids.[1] All, all is in a state of continual fluctuation, from the mandarin's wife, who rattles through the streets in her chariot, to the humble sempstress, who clatters over the pavement in iron-shod pattens.

What chiefly distinguishes the sex at present is the train.

[1] "The Chinese, perhaps, may be said to possess an advantage in the absence of those perpetual and frequently absurd mutations of fashion in Europe, which at one period blow out the same individual like a balloon, whom at another they contract into a mummy. They are not at the mercy and disposal, in matters of taste, of those who make their clothes, and their modes generally last as long as their garments. The only setter of fashions is the board of rites and ceremonies at Pekin, and to depart materially from their ordinances would be considered as something worse than mere *mauvais ton*."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 352.

As a lady's quality or fashion was once determined here by the circumference of her hoop, both are now measured by the length of her tail. Women of moderate fortunes are contented with tails moderately long; but ladies of true taste and distinction set no bounds to their ambition in this particular. I am told the Lady Mayoress, on days of ceremony, carries one longer than a bell-wether of Bantam, whose tail, you know, is trundled along in a wheelbarrow.

Sun of China, what contradictions do we find in this strange world! Not only the people of different countries think in opposition to each other, but the inhabitants of a single island are often found inconsistent with themselves. Would you believe it? this very people, my Fum, who are so fond of seeing their women with long tails, at the same time dock their horses to the very rump!

But you may easily guess that I am no ways displeased with a fashion which tends to increase a demand for the commodities of the East, and is so very beneficial to the country in which I was born. Nothing can be better calculated to increase the price of silk than the present manner of dressing. A lady's train is not bought but at some expense, and after it has swept the public walks for a very few evenings is fit to be worn no longer: more silk must be bought in order to repair the breach, and some ladies of peculiar economy are thus found to patch up their tails eight or ten times in a season. This unnecessary consumption may introduce poverty here, but then we shall be the richer for it in China.

The man in black, who is a professed enemy to this manner of ornamenting the tail, assures me there are numberless inconveniences attending it, and that a lady dressed up to the fashion is as much a cripple as any in Nankin. But his chief indignation is levelled at those who dress in this manner without a proper fortune to support it. He assures me that he has known some who would have a tail though they wanted a petticoat, and others who, without any other pretensions, fancied they became ladies merely from the addition of three superfluous yards of ragged silk. "I know a thrifty, good woman," continues he, "who thinking herself obliged to car-

ry a train like her betters, never walks from home without the uneasy apprehensions of wearing it out too soon; every excursion she makes gives her new anxiety; and her train is every bit as importunate, and wounds her peace as much, as the bladder we sometimes see tied to the tail of a cat."

Nay, he ventures to affirm that a train may often bring a lady into the most critical circumstances: "For should a rude fellow," says he, "offer to come up to ravish a kiss, and the lady attempt to avoid it, in retiring she must necessarily tread upon her train and thus fall fairly upon her back, by which means every one knows—her clothes may be spoiled."

The ladies here make no scruple to laugh at the smallness of a Chinese slipper, but I fancy our wives at China would have a more real cause of laughter could they but see the immoderate length of a European train. Head of Confucius! to view a human being crippling herself with a great unwieldy tail for our diversion; backward she cannot go, forward she must move but slowly, and if ever she attempts to turn round, it must be in a circle not smaller than that described by the wheeling crocodile when it would face an assailant. And yet, to think that all this confers importance and majesty! to think that a lady acquires additional respect from fifteen yards of trailing taffety! I can't contain: ha! ha! ha! This is certainly a remnant of European barbarity: the female Tartar, dressed in sheepskins, is in far more convenient drapery. Their own writers have sometimes inveighed against the absurdity of this fashion, but perhaps it has never been ridiculed so well as upon the Italian theatre, where Pasquariello being engaged to attend on Countess of Fernambroco, having one of his hands employed in carrying her muff, and the other her lapdog, he bears her train majestically along by sticking it in the waistband of his breeches. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXII.

THE SCIENCES USEFUL IN A POPULOUS STATE PREJUDICIAL IN A BARBAROUS ONE.

From the Same.

A DISPUTE has for some time divided the philosophers of Europe: it is debated whether arts and sciences are more serviceable or prejudicial to mankind. They who maintain the cause of literature endeavor to prove their usefulness from the impossibility of a large number of men subsisting in a small tract of country without them; from the pleasure which attends the acquisition; and from the influence of knowledge in promoting practical morality.

They who maintain the opposite opinion display the happiness and innocence of those uncultivated nations who live without learning; urge the numerous vices which are to be found only in polished society; enlarge upon the oppression, the cruelty, and the blood which must necessarily be shed in order to cement civil society; and insist upon the happy equality of conditions in a barbarous state, preferable to the unnatural subordination of a more refined constitution.

This dispute, which has already given so much employment to speculative indolence, has been managed with much ardor, and (not to suppress our sentiments) with but little sagacity. They who insist that the sciences are useful in refined society are certainly right, and they who maintain that barbarous nations are more happy without them are right also; but when one side, for this reason, attempts to prove them as universally useful to the solitary barbarian as to the native of a crowded commonwealth, or when the other endeavors to banish them as prejudicial to all society, even from populous states as well as from the inhabitants of the wilderness, they are both wrong; since that knowledge which makes the happi-

ness of a refined European would be a torment to the precarious tenant of an Asiatic wild.

Let me, to prove this, transport the imagination for a moment to the midst of a forest in Siberia. There we behold the inhabitant, poor indeed, but equally fond of happiness with the most refined philosopher of China. The earth lies uncultivated and uninhabited for miles around him; his little family and he the sole and undisputed possessors. In such circumstances, nature and reason will induce him to prefer a hunter's life to that of cultivating the earth. He will certainly adhere to that manner of living which is carried on at the smallest expense of labor, and that food which is most agreeable to the appetite; he will prefer indolent though precarious luxury to a laborious though permanent competence; and a knowledge of his own happiness will determine him to persevere in native barbarity.

In like manner his happiness will incline him to bind himself by no law. Laws are made in order to secure present property; but he is possessed of no property which he is afraid to lose, and desires no more than will be sufficient to sustain him; to enter into compacts with others would be undergoing a voluntary obligation without the expectance of any reward. He and his countrymen are tenants, not rivals, in the same inexhaustible forest; the increased possessions of one by no means diminishes the expectations arising from equal assiduity in another; there is no need of laws, therefore, to repress ambition, where there can be no mischief attending its most boundless gratifications.

Our solitary Siberian will, in like manner, find the sciences not only entirely useless in directing his practice, but disgusting even in speculation. In every contemplation our curiosity must be first excited by the appearances of things, before our reason undergoes the fatigue of investigating the causes. Some of those appearances are produced by experiment, others by minute inquiry; some arise from a knowledge of foreign climates, and others from an intimate study of our own. But there are few objects in comparison which present themselves to the inhabitant of a barbarous country; the game he

hunts, or the transient cottage he builds, make up the chief objects of his concern; his curiosity, therefore, must be proportionably less; and if that is diminished the reasoning faculty will be diminished in proportion.

Besides, sensual enjoyment adds wings to curiosity. We consider few objects with ardent attention but those which have some connection with our wishes, our pleasures, or our necessities. A desire of enjoyment first interests our passions in the pursuit, points out the object of investigation, and reason then comments where sense has led the way. An increase in the number of our enjoyments, therefore, necessarily produces an increase of scientific research; but, in countries where almost every enjoyment is wanting, reason there seems destitute of its great inspirer, and speculation is the business of fools when it becomes its own reward.

The barbarous Siberian is too wise, therefore, to exhaust his time in quest of knowledge which neither curiosity prompts nor pleasure impels him to pursue. When told of the exact admeasurement of a degree upon the equator at Quito, he feels no pleasure in the account; when informed that such a discovery tends to promote navigation and commerce, he finds himself no way interested in either. A discovery which some have pursued at the hazard of their lives affects him with neither astonishment nor pleasure. He is satisfied with thoroughly understanding the few objects which contribute to his own felicity; he knows the properest places where to lay the snare for the sable, and discerns the value of furs with more than European sagacity. More extended knowledge would only serve to render him unhappy; it might lend a ray to show him the misery of his situation, but could not guide him in his efforts to avoid it. Ignorance is the happiness of the poor.

The misery of a being endowed with sentiments above its capacity of fruition is most admirably described in one of the fables of Lokman,[1] the Indian moralist. "An elephant that

[1] An Abyssinian philosopher of high repute among the Eastern nations. Mohammed has given his name to a chapter of the Koran, in which he introduces

had been peculiarly serviceable in fighting the battles of Wistnow was ordered by the god to wish for whatever he thought proper, and the desire should be attended with immediate gratification. The elephant thanked his benefactor on bended knees, and desired to be endowed with the reason and the faculties of a man. Wistnow was sorry to hear the foolish request, and endeavored to dissuade him from his misplaced ambition; but, finding it to no purpose, gave him at last such a portion of wisdom as could correct even the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster. The reasoning elephant went away rejoicing in his new acquisition; and though his body still retained its ancient form, he found his appetites and passions entirely altered. He first considered that it would not only be more comfortable but also more becoming to wear clothes; but, unhappily, he had no method of making them himself, nor had he the use of speech to demand them from others; and this was the first time he felt real anxiety. He soon perceived how much more elegantly men were fed than he, therefore he began to loathe his usual food, and longed for those delicacies which adorn the tables of princes; but here again he found it impossible to be satisfied, for though he could easily obtain flesh, yet he found it impossible to dress it in any degree of perfection. In short, every pleasure that contributed to the felicity of mankind served only to render him more miserable, as he found himself utterly deprived of the power of enjoyment. In this manner he led a repining, discontented life, detesting himself, and displeased with his ill-judged ambition; till at last his benefactor, Wistnow, taking compassion on his forlorn situation, restored him to the ignorance and the happiness which he was originally formed to enjoy."

No, my friend, to attempt to introduce the sciences into a nation of wandering barbarians is only to render them more

God as saying, "I have bestowed wisdom on Lokman." Many of his apophthegms are scattered in the writings of the Orientals, an entertaining selection from which will be found in D'Herbelot. The reliques of his fables were published (1636) at Leyden, in Arabic and Latin, and translated (1714) into French by Galland, at Paris, and more recently (1799) by Marcel.

miserable than even Nature designed they should be. A life of simplicity is best fitted to a state of solitude.

The great lawgiver of Russia attempted to improve the desolate inhabitants of Siberia by sending among them some of the politest men of Europe. The consequence has shown that the country was as yet unfit to receive them; they languished for a time with a sort of exotic malady; every day degenerated from themselves; and at last, instead of rendering the country more polite, they conformed to the soil, and put on barbarity.

No, my friend, in order to make the sciences useful in any country it must first become populous: the inhabitant must go through the different stages of hunter, shepherd, and husbandman; then, when property becomes valuable, and consequently gives cause for injustice; then, when laws are appointed to repress injury and secure possession; when men, by the sanction of those laws, become possessed of superfluity; when luxury is thus introduced, and demands its continual supply, then it is that the sciences become necessary and useful; the state then cannot subsist without them; they must then be introduced, at once to teach men to draw the greatest possible quantity of pleasure from circumscribed possession, and to restrain them within the bounds of moderate enjoyment.

The sciences are not the cause of luxury, but its consequence; and this destroyer thus brings with it an antidote which resists the virulence of its own poison. By asserting that luxury introduces the sciences, we assert a truth; but if, with those who reject the utility of learning, we assert that the sciences also introduce luxury, we shall be at once false, absurd, and ridiculous. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIII.

SOME CAUTIONS ON LIFE, TAKEN FROM A MODERN PHILOSOPHER OF CHINA.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the Way of Moscow.

You are now arrived at an age, my son, when pleasure dissuades from application: but rob not, by present gratification, all the succeeding period of life of its happiness. Sacrifice a little pleasure at first to the expectance of greater. The study of a few years will make the rest of life completely easy.

But instead of continuing the subject myself, take the following instructions borrowed from a modern philosopher of China:[1] "He who has begun his fortune by study will certainly confirm it by perseverance. The love of books damps the passion for pleasure; and when this passion is once extinguished life is then cheaply supported: thus a man, being possessed of more than he wants, can never be subject to great disappointments, and avoids all those meannesses which indigence sometimes unavoidably produces.

"There is unspeakable pleasure attending the life of a voluntary student. The first time I read an excellent book, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend. When I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one. We ought to lay hold of every incident in life for improvement, the trifling as well as the important. It is not one diamond alone which gives lustre to another; a common coarse stone is also employed for that purpose. Thus I ought to draw advantage from the insults and contempt I meet with from a worthless fellow. His brutality ought to induce me to self-examination, and correct every blemish that may have given rise to his calumny.

[1] A translation of this passage may also be seen in Du Halde, vol. ii. fol. ed. pp. 47 and 58. This extract will at least serve to show that fondness for humor which appears in the writings of the Chinese.—GOLDSMITH.

this last, the vessel is tossed by every billow, and will find shipwreck in every breeze. In a word, obscurity and indigence are the parents of vigilance and economy; vigilance and economy, of riches and honor; riches and honor, of pride and luxury; pride and luxury, of impurity and idleness; and impurity and idleness again produce indigence and obscurity. Such are the revolutions of life." Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIV.

THE ANECDOTES OF SEVERAL POETS WHO LIVED AND DIED IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRETCHEDNESS.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy, at Pekin, in China.

I FANCY the character of a poet is in every country the same: fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future; his conversation that of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool; of fortitude able to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake, yet of sensibility to be affected by the breaking of a teacup—such is his character, which, considered in every light, is the very opposite of that which leads to riches.[1]

The poets of the West are as remarkable for their indigence as their genius, and yet, among the numerous hospitals designed to relieve the poor, I have heard of but one erected for the benefit of decayed authors. This was founded by Pope Urban the Eighth, and called the retreat of the incurables; intimating that it was equally impossible to reclaim the patients who sued for reception from poverty or from poetry. To be sincere, were I to send you an account of the lives of the Western poets, either ancient or modern, I fancy you would think me employed in collecting materials for a history of human wretchedness.

Homer is the first poet and beggar of note among the an-

[1] A sketch drawn, no doubt, from Goldsmith's own character, and certainly with strong points of resemblance.

Tasso



cients: he was blind, and sung his ballads about the streets; but it is observed that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus, the comic poet, was better off; he had two trades—he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave, and Boethius died in jail.[1]

Among the Italians, Paulo Borghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, and yet died because he could get employment in none. Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from some friend in order to pay for a month's subsistence. He has left us a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language. He dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused to be admitted into a hospital which he himself had erected.

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger; and it is certain that the famous Camoens ended his days in a hospital.[2]

If we turn to France we shall there find even stronger instances of the ingratitude of the public. Vaugelas,[3] one of the politest writers, and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the Owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only by night, through fear of his creditors. His last will is very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the discharging his debts, he goes on thus: "But as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall have been

[1] Boethius was beheaded in prison at Pavia, in 526, by order of Theodore, King of the Goths. His work, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," written during his imprisonment, was translated into Anglo-Saxon by Alfred the Great, and into English by Queen Elizabeth. Dr. Johnson advised Miss Carter to undertake a version of it.

[2] Camoens died in an alms-house in 1579.

[3] Vaugelas was born at Chambéry in 1585, and died at Paris in 1650, aged sixty-five years, thirty of which he devoted to a translation of Quintus Curtius.

we were also threatened from the stage with an irreconcilable opposition, and that our singing women were resolved to sing at each other to the end of the season. O my friend, those fears were just! They are not only determined to sing at each other to the end of the season, but, what is worse, to sing the same song; and what is still more insupportable, to make us pay for hearing.

If they be for war, for my part I should advise them to have a public congress, and there fairly squall at each other. What signifies sounding the trumpet of defiance at a distance, and calling in the town to fight their battles? I would have them come boldly into one of the most open and frequented streets, face to face, and there try their skill in quavering.

However this may be, resolved I am that they shall not touch one single piece of silver more of mine. Though I have ears for music, thanks be to Heaven, they are not altogether ass's ears. What! Polly and the Pick-pocket to-night,[1] Polly and the Pick-pocket to-morrow night, and Polly and the Pick-pocket again! I want patience. I'll hear no more. My soul is out of tune; all jarring, discord, and confusion. Rest, rest, ye dear three clinking shillings, in my pocket's bottom: the music you make is more harmonious to my spirit than catgut, rosin, or all the nightingales that ever chirruped in petticoats.

But what raises my indignation to the greatest degree is, that this piping does not only pester me on the stage, but is my punishment in private conversation. What is it to me whether the "fine pipe" of one, or the "great manner" of the other be preferable? What care I if one has a better top or the other a nobler bottom? How am I concerned if one sings from the stomach or the other sings with a snap? Yet, paltry as these matters are, they make a subject of debate wherever I go; and this musical dispute, especially among the fair sex, almost always ends in a very unmusical altercation.

Sure the spirit of contention is mixed into the very constitution of the people! Divisions among the inhabitants of

[1] "The Beggar's Opera."

other countries arise only from their higher concerns, but subjects the most contemptible are made an affair of party here; the spirit is carried even into their amusements. The very ladies, whose duty should seem to allay the impetuosity of the opposite sex, become themselves party champions, engage in the thickest of the fight, scold at each other, and show their courage, even at the expense of their lovers and their beauty.

There are even a numerous set of poets who help to keep up the contention and write for the stage. Mistake me not; I do not mean pieces to be acted upon it, but panegyrical verses on the performers; for that is the most universal method of writing for the stage at present. It is the business of the stage poet, therefore, to watch the appearance of every new player at his own house, and so come out next day with a flaunting copy of newspaper verses. In these Nature and the actor may be set to run races, the player always coming off victorious; or Nature may mistake him for herself; or old Shakspeare may put on his winding-sheet and pay him a visit; or the tuneful Nine may strike up their harps in his praise; or, should it happen to be an actress, Venus, the beauteous Queen of Love, and the naked Graces, are ever in waiting; the lady must be herself a goddess bred and born; she must— But you shall have a specimen of one of these poems, which may convey a more precise idea:

"ON SEEING MRS. —— PERFORM IN THE CHARACTER OF ——.

"To you, bright fair, the Nine address their lays,
And tune my feeble voice to sing thy praise.
The heart-felt power of every charm divine,
Who can withstand their all-commanding shine?
See how she moves along with every grace,
While soul-brought tears steal down each shining face!
She speaks, 'tis rapture all and nameless bliss—
Ye gods! what transport e'er compar'd to this?
As when in Paphian groves the Queen of Love,
With fond complaint address'd the listening Jove,
'Twas joy and endless blisses all around,
And rocks forgot their hardness at the sound.
Then first, at last e'en Jove was taken in,
And felt her charms, without disguise, within."

And yet think not, my friend, that I have any particular animosity against the champions who are at the head of the present commotion. On the contrary, I could find pleasure in their music, if served up at proper intervals; if I heard it only on proper occasions, and not about it wherever I go. In fact, I could patronize them both; and as an instance of my condescension in this particular they may come and give me a song at my lodgings on any evening when I am at leisure, provided they keep a becoming distance, and stand, while they continue to entertain me, with decent humility at the door.

You perceive I have not read the seventeen books of Chinese ceremonies to no purpose. I know the proper share of respect due to every rank in society. Stage-players, fire-eaters, singing-women, dancing-dogs, wild beasts, and wire-walkers, as their efforts are exerted for our amusement, ought not entirely to be despised. The laws of every country should allow them to play their tricks at least with impunity. They should not be branded with the ignominious appellation of vagabonds; at least they deserve a rank in society equal to the mystery of barbers or undertakers; and, could my influence extend so far, they should be allowed to earn even forty or fifty pounds a year, if eminent in their profession.

I am sensible, however, that you will censure me for profusion in this respect, bred up as you are in the narrow prejudices of Eastern frugality. You will undoubtedly assert that such a stipend is too great for so useless an employment. Yet how will your surprise increase when told that, though the law holds them as vagabonds,[1] many of them earn more than a thousand a year! You are amazed. There is cause for amazement. A vagabond with a thousand a year is indeed a curiosity in nature; a wonder far surpassing the flying-fish, petrified crab, or travelling lobster. However, from my great love to the profession, I would willingly have them divested of part of their contempt and part of their finery;

[1] In China stage-players are considered infamous, and inadmissible as candidates for the office of a mandarin. By an enactment of the Emperor Kien-lung it requires three generations to wipe off the stain.

the law should kindly take them under the wing of protection, fix them into a corporation like that of the barbers, and abridge their ignominy and their pensions. As to their abilities in other respects, I would leave that entirely to the public, who are certainly in this case the properest judges—whether they despise them or no.

Yes, my Fum, I would abridge their pensions. A theatrical warrior, who conducts the battles of the stage, should be cooped up with the same caution as a bantam cock that is kept for fighting. When one of those animals is taken from its native dunghill, we retrench it both in the quantity of its food and the number of its seraglio: players should in the same manner be fed, not fattened; they should be permitted to get their bread, but not to eat the people's bread into the bargain; and, instead of being permitted to keep four mistresses, in conscience they should be contented only with two.

Were stage-players thus brought into bounds, perhaps we should find their admirers less sanguine, and consequently less ridiculous, in patronizing them. We should no longer be struck with the absurdity of seeing the same people whose valor makes such a figure abroad, apostrophizing in the praise of a bouncing blockhead, and wrangling in the defence of a copper-tailed actress at home.

I shall conclude my letter with the sensible admonition of Mê, the philosopher. "You love harmony," says he, "and are charmed with music. I do not blame you for hearing a fine voice, when you are in your closet, with a lovely parterre under your eye, or in the night-time, while perhaps the moon diffuses her silver rays. But is a man to carry this passion so far as to let a company of comedians, musicians, and singers grow rich upon his exhausted fortune? If so, he resembles one of those dead bodies whose brains the embalmer has picked out through its ears." Adieu.

LETTER LXXXVI.

THE RACES OF NEWMARKET RIDICULED.—DESCRIPTION OF A CART-RACE.

From the Same.

Of all the places of amusement where gentlemen and ladies are entertained, I have not been yet to visit Newmarket. This, I am told, is a large field; where, upon certain occasions, three or four horses are brought together, then set a-running, and that horse which runs fastest wins the wager.

This is reckoned a very polite and fashionable amusement here, much more followed by the nobility than partridge-fighting at Java or paper kites in Madagascar. Several of the great here, I am told, understand as much of farriery as their grooms; and a horse with any share of merit can never want a patron among the nobility.

We have a description of this entertainment almost every day in some of the gazettes, as, for instance: "On such a day the Give-and-Take Plate was run for between his grace's Crab, his lordship's Periwinkle, and Squire Smackem's Slamerkin. All rode their own horses. There was the greatest concourse of nobility that has been known here for several seasons. The odds were in favor of Crab in the beginning; but Slamerkin, after the first heat, seemed to have the match hollow: however, it was soon seen that Periwinkle improved in wind, which at last turned out accordingly; Crab was run to a stand-still, Slamerkin was knocked up, and Periwinkle was brought in with universal applause." Thus, you see, Periwinkle received universal applause; and, no doubt, his lordship came in for some share of that praise which was so liberally bestowed upon Periwinkle. Sun of China! how glorious must the senator appear in his cap and leather breeches, his whip crossed in his mouth, and thus coming to the goal,

among the shouts of grooms, jockeys, pimps, stable-bred dukes, and degraded generals!

From the description of this princely amusement, now transcribed, and from the great veneration I have for the characters of its principal promoters, I make no doubt but I shall look upon a horse-race with becoming reverence, predisposed as I am by a similar amusement, of which I have lately been a spectator; for just now I happened to have an opportunity of being present at a cart-race.

Whether this contention between three carts of different parishes was promoted by a subscription among the nobility, or whether the grand jury, in council assembled, had gloriously combined to encourage plaustral[1] merit, I cannot take upon me to determine; but certain it is, the whole was conducted with the utmost regularity and decorum, and the company, which made a brilliant appearance, were universally of opinion that the sport was high, the running fine, and the riders influenced by no bribe.

It was run on the road from London to a village called Brentford, between a turnip-cart, a dust-cart, and a dung-cart; each of the owners condescending to mount and be his own driver. The odds at starting were Dust against Dung five to four; but, after half a mile's going, the knowing ones found themselves all on the wrong side, and it was Turnip against the field, brass to silver.

Soon, however, the contest became more doubtful; Turnip, indeed, kept the way, but it was perceived that Dung had better bottom. The road re-echoed with the shouts of the spectators. "Dung against Turnip! Turnip against Dung!" was now the universal cry; neck and neck; one rode lighter but the other had more judgment. I could not but particularly observe the ardor with which the fair sex espoused the cause of the different riders on this occasion; one was charmed with the unwashed beauties of Dung; another was captivated with the patibulary aspect of Turnip; while, in

[1] This, and another word in the same letter, *patibulary*, are among the very few words which Goldsmith has ventured to coin.

the mean time, unfortunate, gloomy Dust, who came whipping behind, was cheered by the encouragements of some and pity of all.

The contention now continued for some time without a possibility of determining to whom victory designed the prize. The winning-post appeared in view, and he who drove the turnip-cart assured himself of success; and successful he might have been had his horse been as ambitious as he; but, on approaching a turn from the road which led homewards, the horse fairly stood still, and refused to move a foot farther. The dung-cart had scarce time to enjoy this temporary triumph when it was pitched headlong into a ditch by the wayside and the rider left to wallow in congenial mud. Dust, in the mean time, soon came up, and not being far from the post, came in, amid the shouts and acclamations of all the spectators, and greatly caressed by all the quality of Brentford. Fortune was kind only to one, who ought to have been favorable to all; each had peculiar merit, each labored hard to earn the prize, and each richly deserved the cart he drove.

I do not know whether this description may not have anticipated that which I intended giving of Newmarket.[1] I am told there is little else to be seen even there. There may be some minute differences in the dress of the spectators, but

[1] "Since the year 1753 the race-ground at Newmarket has been the property of the Jockey Club. Betting-posts are placed on various parts of the heath, at some one of which the sportsmen assemble immediately after each race, to make their bets on the one that is to follow. As not more than half an hour elapses during the events, the scene is one of the most animated description, and a stranger would imagine that all the tongues of Babel were let loose again. No country under the heavens produces such a scene as this. 'What do you bet on this race, my lord?' says a vulgar-looking man on a shabby hack, with a shocking bad hat. 'I want to back the field,' says my lord. '*So do I*,' says the *leg*. 'I'll bet 500 to 200 you don't name the winner,' cries my lord. 'I'll take *six*,' exclaims the leg. 'I'll bet it you,' roars my lord. '*I'll double it*,' bellows the leg. 'Done,' shouts the peer. '*Treble it?*' 'No.' The bet is entered, and so much for *wanting to back the field*. Scores of such scenes take place in these momentous half-hours. All bets are paid the following morning, and £50,000 or more have been known to exchange hands in one day. Yet Newmarket is but a speck on the ocean when compared with the sum-total of our provincial meetings, of which there are annually about one hundred and twenty in England, Scotland, and Wales."—*The Turf in* 1833. (See *Quarterly Rev.*, vol. lix. p. 389.)

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none at all in their understandings. The quality of Brentford are as remarkable for politeness and delicacy as the breeders of Newmarket. The quality of Brentford drive their own carts, and the honorable fraternity of Newmarket ride their own horses. In short, the matches in one place are as rational as those in the other; and it is more than probable that turnips, dust, and dung are all that can be found to furnish out description in either.

Forgive me, my friend, but a person like me, bred up in a philosophic seclusion, is apt to regard, perhaps, with too much asperity those occurrences which sink man below his station in nature, and diminish the intrinsic value of humanity.

LETTER LXXXVII.

THE FOLLY OF THE WESTERN PARTS OF EUROPE IN EMPLOYING THE RUSSIANS TO FIGHT THEIR BATTLES.

From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi.

You tell me the people of Europe are wise; but where lies their wisdom? You say they are valiant, too; yet I have some reason to doubt of their valor. They are engaged in war among each other, yet apply to the Russians, their neighbors and ours, for assistance. Cultivating such an alliance argues at once imprudence and timidity. All subsidies paid for such an aid is strengthening the Russians, already too powerful, and weakening the employers, already exhausted by intestine commotions.

I cannot avoid beholding the Russian empire as the natural enemy of the more western parts of Europe; as an enemy already possessed of great strength, and from the nature of the government every day threatening to become more powerful. This extensive empire, which both in Europe and Asia occupies almost a third of the Old World, was about two centuries ago divided into separate kingdoms and dukedoms, and, from such a division, consequently feeble. Since the times, however, of Johan Basilides it has increased in

strength and extent; and those untrodden forests, those innumerable savage animals which formerly covered the face of the country, are now removed, and colonies of mankind planted in their room. A kingdom thus enjoying peace internally, possessed of an unbounded extent of dominion, and learning the military art at the expense of others abroad, must every day grow more powerful; and it is probable we shall hear Russia in future times, as formerly, called the *officina gentium.*

It was long the wish of Peter, their great monarch, to have a fort in some of the western parts of Europe; many of his schemes and treaties were directed to this end, but, happily for Europe, he failed in them all. A fort in the power of this people would be like the possession of a flood-gate; and whenever ambition, interest, or necessity prompted, they might then be able to deluge the whole Western world with a barbarous inundation.

Believe me, my friend, I cannot sufficiently contemn the politicians of Europe who thus make this powerful people arbitrators in their quarrel. The Russians are now at that period between refinement and barbarity which seems most adapted to military achievement; and if once they happen to get footing in the western parts of Europe, it is not the feeble efforts of the sons of effeminacy and dissension that can serve to remove them. The fertile valley and soft climate will ever be sufficient inducements to draw whole myriads from their native deserts, the trackless wild, or snowy mountain.

History, experience, reason, nature, expand the book of wisdom before the eyes of mankind, but they will not read. We have seen with terror a winged phalanx of famished locusts, each singly contemptible, but from multitude become hideous, cover like clouds the face of day, and threaten the whole world with ruin. We have seen them settling on the fertile plains of India and Egypt, destroying in an instant the labors and the hopes of nations; sparing neither the fruit of the earth nor the verdure of the fields, and changing into a frightful desert landscapes of once luxuriant beauty. We have seen myriads of ants issuing together from the

Southern desert, like a torrent whose source was inexhaustible, succeeding each other without end, and renewing their destroyed forces with unwearied perseverance, bringing desolation wherever they came, banishing men and animals, and, when destitute of all subsistence, in heaps infecting the wilderness which they had made. Like these have been the migrations of men. When as yet savage, and almost resembling their brute partners in the forest, subject like them only to the instincts of nature, and directed by hunger alone in the choice of an abode, how have we seen whole armies starting wild at once from their forests and their dens! Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, myriads of men, animals in human form, without country, without name, without laws, outpowering by numbers all opposition, ravaging cities, overturning empires; and, after having destroyed whole nations, and spread extensive desolation, how have we seen them sink oppressed by some new enemy, more barbarous and even more unknown than they! Adieu.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

THE LADIES ADVISED TO GET HUSBANDS. A STORY TO THIS PURPOSE.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

As the instruction of the fair sex in this country is entirely committed to the care of foreigners—as their language-masters, music-masters, hair-frizzers, and governesses are all from abroad—I had some intentions of opening a female academy myself, and made no doubt, as I was quite a foreigner, of meeting a favorable reception.

In this I intended to instruct the ladies in all the conjugal mysteries: wives should be taught the art of managing husbands, and maids the skill of properly choosing them; I would teach a wife how far she might venture to be sick without giving disgust; she should be acquainted with the great ben-

efits of the colic in the stomach, and all the thorough-bred insolence of fashion; maids should learn the secret of nicely distinguishing every competitor; they should be able to know the difference between a pedant and a scholar, a citizen and a prig, a squire and his horse, a beau and his monkey; but chiefly they should be taught the art of managing their smiles, from the contemptuous simper to the long, laborious laugh.

But I have discontinued the project; for what would signify teaching ladies the manner of governing or choosing husbands, when marriage is at present so much out of fashion that a lady is very well off who can get any husband at all? Celibacy now prevails in every rank of life; the streets are crowded with old bachelors, and the houses with ladies who have refused good offers, and are never likely to receive any for the future.

The only advice, therefore, I could give the fair sex, as things stand at present, is to get husbands as fast as they can. There is certainly nothing in the whole creation, not even Babylon in ruins, more truly deplorable than a lady in the virgin bloom of sixty-three, or a battered unmarried beau, who squibs about from place to place, showing his pigtail wig and his ears. The one appears to my imagination in the form of a double nightcap or a roll of pomatum; the other in the shape of an electuary or a box of pills.

I would once more, therefore, advise the ladies to get husbands. I would desire them not to discard an old lover without very sufficient reasons, nor treat the new with ill-nature till they know him false; let not prudes allege the falseness of the sex, coquettes the pleasures of long courtship, or parents the necessary preliminaries of penny for penny. I have reasons that would silence even a casuist in this particular. In the first place, therefore, I divide the subject into fifteen heads, and then *sic argumentor*— But, not to give you and myself the spleen, be contented at present with an Indian tale:

In a winding of the river Amidar, just before it falls into the Caspian Sea, there lies an island unfrequented by the inhabitants of the Continent. In this seclusion, blessed with

all that wild, uncultivated nature could bestow, lived a princess and her two daughters. She had been wrecked upon the coast while her children as yet were infants, who, of consequence, though grown up, were entirely unacquainted with man. Yet, inexperienced as the young ladies were in the opposite sex, both early discovered symptoms, the one of prudery, the other of being a coquette. The eldest was ever learning maxims of wisdom and discretion from her mamma, while the youngest employed all her hours in gazing at her own face in a neighboring fountain.

Their usual amusement in this solitude was fishing: their mother had taught them all the secrets of the art; she showed them which were the most likely places to throw out the line, what baits were most proper for the various seasons, and the best manner to draw up the finny prey, when they had hooked it. In this manner they spent their time, easy and innocent, till one day the princess, being indisposed, desired them to go and catch her a sturgeon or a shark for supper, which she fancied might sit easy on her stomach. The daughters obeyed, and clapping on a gold-fish, the usual bait on those occasions, went and sat upon one of the rocks, letting the gilded hook glide down with the stream.

On the opposite shore, farther down at the mouth of the river, lived a diver for pearls, a youth who by long habit in his trade was almost grown amphibious, so that he could remain whole hours at the bottom of the water without ever fetching breath. He happened to be at that very instant diving when the ladies were fishing with the gilded hook. Seeing, therefore, the bait, which to him had the appearance of real gold, he was resolved to seize the prize; but both his hands being already filled with pearl oysters, he found himself obliged to snap at it with his mouth: the consequence is easily imagined; the hook, before unperceived, was instantly fastened in his jaw, nor could he, with all his efforts or his floundering, get free.

"Sister!" cries the youngest princess, "I have certainly caught a monstrous fish; I never perceived anything struggle so at the end of my line before; come and help me to draw

it in." They both now, therefore, assisted in fishing up the diver on shore; but nothing could equal their surprise upon seeing him. "Bless my eyes!" cries the prude, "what have we got here? This is a very odd fish, to be sure! I never saw anything in my life look so queer: what eyes, what terrible claws, what a monstrous snout! I have read of this monster somewhere before; it certainly must be a tanlang, that eats women; let us throw it back into the sea where we found it."

The diver, in the mean time, stood upon the beach at the end of the line, with the hook in his mouth, using every art that he thought could best excite pity, and particularly looking extremely tender, which is usual in such circumstances. The coquette, therefore, in some measure influenced by the innocence of his looks, ventured to contradict her companion. "Upon my word, sister," says she, "I see nothing in the animal so very terrible as you are pleased to apprehend; I think it may serve well enough for a change. Always sharks, and sturgeons, and lobsters, and crawfish make me quite sick. I fancy a slice of this, nicely grilladed, and dressed up with shrimp sauce, would be very pretty eating. I fancy mamma would like a bit with pickles above all things in the world; and if it should not sit easy on her stomach, it will be time enough to discontinue it when found disagreeable, you know." "Horrid!" cries the prude; "would the girl be poisoned? I tell you it is a tanlang; I have read of it in twenty places. It is everywhere described as the most pernicious animal that ever infested the ocean. I am certain it is the most insidious, ravenous creature in the world, and is certain destruction if taken internally." The youngest sister was now, therefore, obliged to submit: both assisted in drawing the hook with some violence from the diver's jaw; and he, finding himself at liberty, bent his breast against the broad wave and disappeared in an instant.

Just at this juncture the mother came down to the beach to know the cause of her daughters' delay; they told her every circumstance, describing the monster they had caught. The old lady was one of the most discreet women in the

world; she was called the black-eyed princess, from two black eyes she had received in her youth, being a little addicted to boxing in her liquor. "Alas, my children," cries she, "what have you done! the fish you caught was a man-fish, one of the most tame domestic animals in the world. We could have let him run and play about the garden, and he would have been twenty times more entertaining than our squirrel or monkey." "If that be all," says the young coquette, "we will fish for him again. If that be all, I'll hold three toothpicks to one pound of snuff I catch him whenever I please." Accordingly, they threw in their line once more, but, with all their gilding and paddling and assiduity, they could never after catch the diver. In this state of solitude and disappointment they continued for many years, still fishing, but without success; till at last the genius of the place, in pity to their distresses, changed the prude into a shrimp and the coquette into an oyster. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXIX.

THE FOLLY OF REMOTE OR USELESS DISQUISITIONS AMONG THE LEARNED.

From the Same.

I AM amused, my dear Fum, with the labors of some of the learned here. One shall write you a whole folio on the dissection of a caterpillar. Another shall swell his works with a description of the plumage on the wing of a butterfly; a third shall see a little world on a peach-leaf, and publish a book to describe what his readers might see more clearly in two minutes, only by being furnished with eyes and a microscope.

I have frequently compared the understandings of such men to their own glasses. Their field of vision is too contracted to take in the whole of any but minute objects; they view all nature bit by bit: now the proboscis, now the antennæ, now the pinnæ of—a flea. Now the polypus comes to breakfast upon a worm; now it is kept up to see how long it

will live without eating; now it is turned inside outward; and now it sickens and dies. Thus they proceed, laborious in trifles, constant in experiment, without one single abstraction, by which alone knowledge may be properly said to increase; till at last their ideas, ever employed upon minute things, contract to the size of the diminutive object, and a single mite shall fill the whole mind's capacity.

Yet, believe me, my friend, ridiculous as these men are to the world, they are set up as objects of esteem for each other. They have particular places appointed for their meetings; in which one shows his cockle-shell, and is praised by all the society; another produces his powder, makes some experiments that result in nothing, and comes off with admiration and applause; a third comes out with the important discovery of some new process in the skeleton of a mole, and is set down as the accurate and sensible; while one still more fortunate than the rest, by pickling, potting, and preserving monsters, rises into unbounded reputation.

The labors of such men, instead of being calculated to amuse the public, are laid out only in diverting each other. The world becomes very little the better or the wiser for knowing what is the peculiar food of an insect that is itself the food of another, which in its turn is eaten by a third; but there are men who have studied themselves into a habit of investigating and admiring such minutiæ. To these such subjects are pleasing, as there are some who contentedly spend whole days in endeavoring to solve enigmas, or disentangle the puzzling-sticks of children.

But of all the learned those who pretend to investigate remote antiquity have least to plead in their own defence, when they carry this passion to a faulty excess. They are generally found to supply by conjecture the want of record, and then by perseverance are wrought up into a confidence of the truth of opinions which even to themselves at first appeared founded only in imagination.

The Europeans have heard much of the kingdom of China; its politeness, arts, commerce, laws, and morals are, however, but very imperfectly known among them. They have even

now in their Indian warehouses numberless utensils, plants, minerals, and machines, of the use of which they are entirely ignorant; nor can any among them even make a probable guess for what they might have been designed. Yet, though this people be so ignorant of the present real state of China, the philosophers I am describing have entered into long, learned, laborious disputes about what China was two thousand years ago. China and European happiness are but little connected even at this day; but European happiness and China two thousand years ago have certainly no connection at all. However, the learned have written on and pursued the subject through all the labyrinths of antiquity; though the early dews and the tainted gale be passed away, though no footsteps remain to direct the doubtful chase, yet still they run forward, open upon the uncertain scent, and, though in fact they follow nothing, are earnest in the pursuit. In this chase, however, they all take different ways. One, for example, confidently assures us that China was peopled by a colony from Egypt. Sesostris, he observes, led his army as far as the Ganges; therefore, if he went so far, he might still have gone as far as China, which is but about a thousand miles from thence; therefore he did go to China; therefore China was not peopled before he went there; therefore it was peopled by him. Besides, the Egyptians have pyramids: the Chinese have in like manner their porcelain tower; the Egyptians used to light up candles upon every rejoicing: the Chinese have lanthorns upon the same occasion; the Egyptians had their great river: so had the Chinese. But what serves to put the matter past a doubt is that the ancient kings of China and those of Egypt were called by the same names. The Emperor Ki is certainly the same with King Atoes; for if we only change *K* into *A*, and *i* into *toes*, we shall have the name Atoes; and with equal ease Menes may be proved to be the same with the Emperor Yu; therefore the Chinese are a colony from Egypt.

But another of the learned is entirely different from the last; and he will have the Chinese to be a colony planted by Noah just after the deluge. First, from the vast similitude

there is between the name of Fohi, the founder of the Chinese monarchy, and that of Noah, the preserver of the human race; Noah, Fohi—very like each other, truly: they have each but four letters, and only two of the four happen to differ. But, to strengthen the argument, Fohi, as the Chinese chronicle asserts, had no father. Noah, it is true, had a father, as the European Bible tells us; but then, as this father was probably drowned in the flood, it is just the same as if he had no father at all: therefore Noah and Fohi are the same. Just after the flood the earth was covered with mud; if it was covered with mud it must have been incrustated mud; if it was incrustated it was clothed with verdure; this was a fine, unembarrassed road for Noah to fly from his wicked children: he therefore did fly from them, and took a journey of two thousand miles for his own amusement; therefore Noah and Fohi are the same.

Another sect of literati—for they all pass among the vulgar for very great scholars—assert that the Chinese came neither from the colony of Sesostris nor from Noah, but are descended from Magog, Meshec, and Tubal, and therefore neither Sesostris, nor Noah, nor Fohi are the same.

It is thus, my friend, that indolence assumes the airs of wisdom, and, while it tosses the cup-and-ball with infantine folly, desires the world to look on, and calls the stupid pastime philosophy and learning.[1] Adieu.

[1] "That shrewd critic and commentator on the writings of the Jesuits on China, M. Pauw, exposed the absurdity of this supposition that the Chinese are an Egyptian colony; and we entirely agree that such an assumption is not supported by any testimony, either direct or circumstantial. In truth, there exists not the slightest shadow of resemblance between the Chinese written characters or symbols and the hieroglyphics of Egypt; and, we may add, neither do the physical characteristics of color, form, and features in the two races in the least accord—whether we take the present Copts, the figures on the temples, or the mummies in the tombs to be the true representatives of the ancient Egyptians."—*Quart. Rev.*, vol. lvi. p. 493.

LETTER XC.

THE ENGLISH SUBJECT TO THE SPLEEN.

From the Same.

When the men of this country are once turned of thirty they regularly retire every year, at proper intervals, to lie-in of the spleen. The vulgar, unfurnished with the luxurious comforts of the soft cushion, down bed, and easy-chair, are obliged, when the fit is on them, to nurse it up by drinking, idleness, and ill-humor. In such dispositions unhappy is the foreigner who happens to cross them; his long chin, tarnished coat, or pinched hat are sure to receive no quarter. If they meet no foreigner, however, to fight with, they are in such cases generally content with beating each other.

The rich, as they have more sensibility, are operated upon with greater violence by this disorder. Different from the poor, instead of becoming more insolent, they grow totally unfit for opposition. A general here, who would have faced a culverin when well, if the fit be on him shall hardly find courage to snuff a candle. An admiral, who could have opposed a broadside without shrinking, shall sit whole days in his chamber, mobbed up in double nightcaps, shuddering at the intrusive breeze, and distinguishable from his wife only by his black beard and heavy eyebrows.

In the country, this disorder mostly attacks the fair sex; in town, it is most unfavorable to the men. A lady who has pined whole years amid cooing doves and complaining nightingales, in rural retirement, shall resume all her vivacity in one night at a city gaming-table; her husband, who roared, hunted, and got drunk at home, shall grow splenetic in town, in proportion to his wife's good-humor. Upon their arrival in London they exchange their disorders. In consequence of her parties and excursions, he puts on the furred cap and scar-

let stomacher, and perfectly resembles an Indian husband, who, when his wife is safely delivered, permits her to transact business abroad, while he undergoes all the formality of keeping his bed, and receiving all the condolence in her place.

But those who reside constantly in town owe this disorder mostly to the influence of the *weather*.[1] It is impossible to describe what a variety of transmutations an east wind will produce; it has been known to change a lady of fashion into a parlor couch, an alderman into a plate of custards, and a dispenser of justice into a rat-trap. Even philosophers themselves are not exempt from its influence; it has often converted a poet into a coral and bells, and a patriot senator into a dumb-waiter.

Some days ago I went to visit the man in black, and entered his house with that cheerfulness which the certainty of a favorable reception always inspires. Upon opening the door of his apartment, I found him, with the most rueful face imaginable, in a morning-gown and a flannel nightcap, earnestly employed in learning to blow the German flute. Struck with the absurdity of a man in the decline of life thus blowing away all his constitution and spirits, even without the consolation of being musical, I ventured to ask what could induce him to attempt learning so difficult an instrument so late in life. To this he made no reply, but, groaning, and still holding the flute to his lips, continued to gaze at me for some moments very angrily, and then proceeded to practise his gamut as before. After having produced a variety of the

[1] "I must needs add one thing more in favor of our climate, which I heard the king (Charles II.) say, and I thought new and right, and truly like a king of England that loved and esteemed his own country; it was in reply to some of the company that were reviling our climate, and extolling those of Italy and Spain, or at least of France: he said he thought that was the best climate where he could be abroad in the air with pleasure, or at least without trouble or inconvenience, the most days in the year and the most hours of the day; and this he thought he could be in England more than in any country he knew of in Europe. And I believe it is true, not only of the hot and the cold, but even among our neighbors in France, and the Low Countries themselves, where the heats and the colds, and changes of seasons are less treatable than they are with us."—Sir William Temple's *Works*, ed. 1770, vol. iii. p. 219.

most hideous tones in nature, at last, turning to me, he demanded whether I did not think he had made a surprising progress in two days? "You see," continues he, "I have got the *ambusheer* already, and as for fingering, my master tells me I shall have that in a few lessons more." I was so much astonished with this instance of inverted ambition that I knew not what to reply, but soon discerned the cause of all his absurdities: my friend was under a metamorphosis by the power of spleen, and flute-blowing was unluckily become his adventitious passion.

In order, therefore, to banish his anxiety imperceptibly by seeming to indulge it, I began to descant on those gloomy topics by which philosophers often get rid of their own spleen, by communicating it: the wretchedness of a man in this life; the happiness of some, wrought out of the miseries of others; the necessity that wretches should expire under punishm[illegible] that rogues might enjoy affluence in tranquillity: I led h[illegible] on from the inhumanity of the rich to the ingratitude of th[illegible] beggar; from the insincerity of refinement to the fierceness of rusticity; and at last had the good-fortune to restore him to his usual serenity of temper, by permitting him to expatiate upon all the modes of human misery.

"Some nights ago," says my friend, "sitting alone by my fire, I happened to look into an account of the detection of a set of men called the thief-takers. I read over the many hideous cruelties of those haters of mankind; of their pretended friendship to wretches they meant to betray; of their sending men out to rob, and then hanging them. I could not avoid sometimes interrupting the narrative by crying out, 'Yet these are men!' As I went on I was informed that they had lived by this practice several years, and had been enriched by the price of blood. 'And yet,' cried I, 'I have been sent into the world, and am desired to call these men my brothers!' I read that the very man who led the condemned wretch to the gallows was he who falsely swore his life away. 'And yet,' continued I, 'that perjurer had just such a nose, such lips, such hands, and such eyes as Newton.' I at last came to the account of the wretch that was searched after

robbing one of the thief-takers of half a crown. Those of the confederacy knew that he had got but that single half-crown in the world; after a long search, therefore, which they knew would be fruitless, and taking from him the half-crown, which they knew was all he had, one of the gang compassionately cried out, 'Alas! poor creature, let him keep all the rest he has got; it will do him service in Newgate, where we are sending him.' This was an instance of such complicated guilt and hypocrisy that I threw down the book in an agony of rage, and began to think with malice of all the human kind. I sat silent for some minutes; and soon perceiving the ticking of my watch beginning to grow noisy and troublesome, I quickly placed it out of hearing and strove to resume my serenity. But the watchman soon gave me a second alarm. I had scarcely recovered from this when my peace was assaulted by the wind at my window; and when that ceased to blow I listened for death-watches in the wainscot. I now found my whole system discomposed. I strove to find a resource in philosophy and reason; but what could I oppose, or where direct my blow, when I could see no enemy to combat? I saw no misery approaching, nor knew any I had to fear, yet still I was miserable. Morning came: I sought for tranquillity in dissipation, sauntered from one place of public resort to another, but found myself disagreeable to my acquaintance and ridiculous to others. I tried at different times dancing, fencing, and riding; I solved geometrical problems, shaped tobacco-stoppers, wrote verses, and cut paper. At last I placed my affections on music, and find that earnest employment, if it cannot cure, at least will palliate every anxiety." Adieu.

LETTER XCI.

THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE AND SOIL UPON THE TEMPER AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE ENGLISH.

From the Same.

It is no unpleasing contemplation to consider the influence which soil and climate have upon the disposition of the inhabitants, the animals, and vegetables of different countries. That among the brute creation is much more visible than in man, and that in vegetables more than either. In some places those plants which are entirely poisonous at home lose their deleterious quality by being carried abroad. There are serpents in Macedonia so harmless as to be used as playthings for children; and we are told that in some parts of Fez there are lions so very timorous as to be scared away, though coming in herds, by the cries of women.

I know of no country where the influence of climate and soil is more visible than in England; the same hidden cause which gives courage to their dogs and cocks gives also fierceness to their men. But chiefly this ferocity appears among the vulgar. The polite of every country pretty nearly resemble each other. But, as in simpling it is among the uncultivated productions of nature we are to examine the characteristic differences of climate and soil, so in an estimate of the genius of a people we must look among the sons of unpolished rusticity. The vulgar English, therefore, may be easily distinguished from all the rest of the world by superior pride, impatience, and a peculiar hardiness of soul.

Perhaps no qualities in the world are more susceptible of a fine polish than these; artificial complaisance and easy deference being superinduced over these generally form a great character; something at once elegant and majestic, affable yet sincere. Such in general are the better sort; but

they who are left in primitive rudeness are the least disposed for society with others, or comfort internally, of any people under the sun.

The poor, indeed, of every country are but little prone to treat each other with tenderness; their own miseries are too apt to engross all their pity; and perhaps, too, they give but little commiseration, as they find but little from others. But in England the poor treat each other, upon every occasion, with more than savage animosity, and as if they were in a state of open war by nature. In China if two porters should meet in a narrow street, they would lay down their burdens, make a thousand excuses to each other for the accidental interruption, and beg pardon on their knees; if two men of the same occupation should meet here, they would first begin to scold, and at last to beat each other. One would think they had miseries enough resulting from penury and labor not to increase them by ill-nature among themselves, and subjection to new penalties; but such considerations never weigh with them.

But, to recompense this strange absurdity, they are in the main generous, brave, and enterprising. They feel the slightest injuries with a degree of ungoverned impatience, but resist the greatest calamities with surprising fortitude.[1] Those miseries under which any other people in the world would sink they have often shown they were capable of enduring; if accidentally cast upon some desolate coast, their perseverance is beyond what any other nation is capable of sustaining; if imprisoned for crimes, their efforts to escape are greater than among others. The peculiar strength of their prisons, when compared to those elsewhere, argues their hardiness; even the strongest prisons I have ever seen in other countries would be very insufficient to confine the untamable spirit of an Englishman. In short, what man dares do in circumstances of danger an Englishman will. His virtues

[1] "Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state
With daring aims irregularly great," etc.
See *The Traveller*, i. 17.

seem to sleep in the calm, and are called out only to combat the kindred storm.

But the greatest eulogy of this people is the generosity of their miscreants—the tenderness, in general, of their robbers and highwaymen. Perhaps no people can produce instances of the same kind, where the desperate mix pity with injustice; still show that they understand a distinction in crimes, and even in acts of violence have still some tincture of remaining virtue. In every other country robbery and murder go almost always together; here it seldom happens, except upon ill-judged resistance or pursuit. The banditti of other countries are unmerciful to a supreme degree; the highwayman and robber here are generous, at least to the public, and pretend to virtues in their intercourse among each other. Taking, therefore, my opinion of the English from the virtues and vices practised among the vulgar, they at once present to a stranger all their faults, and keep their virtues up only for the inquiring eye of a philosopher.

Foreigners are generally shocked at their insolence upon first coming among them: they find themselves ridiculed and insulted in every street; they meet with none of those trifling civilities so frequent elsewhere, which are instances of mutual good-will, without previous acquaintance: they travel through the country, either too ignorant or too obstinate to cultivate a closer acquaintance, meet every moment something to excite their disgust, and return home to characterize this as the region of spleen, insolence, and ill-nature. In short, England would be the last place in the world I would travel to by way of amusement, but the first for instruction. I would choose to have others for my acquaintance, but Englishmen for my friends.

LETTER XCII.

THE MANNER IN WHICH SOME PHILOSOPHERS MAKE ARTIFICIAL MISERY.

To the Same.

THE mind is ever ingenious in making its own distress. The wandering beggar, who has none to protect, or feed, or to shelter him, fancies complete happiness in labor and a full meal; take him from rags and want, feed, clothe, and employ him, his wishes now rise one step above his station; he could be happy were he possessed of raiment, food, and ease. Suppose his wishes gratified even in these, his prospects widen as he ascends; he finds himself in affluence and tranquillity, indeed, but indolence soon breeds anxiety, and he desires not only to be freed from pain, but to be possessed of pleasure: pleasure is granted him, and this but opens his soul to ambition; and ambition will be sure to taint his future happiness either with jealousy, disappointment, or fatigue.

But of all the arts of distress found out by man for his own torment, perhaps that of philosophic misery is most truly ridiculous; a passion nowhere carried to so extravagant an excess as in the country where I now reside. It is not enough to engage all the compassion of a philosopher here that his own globe is harassed with wars, pestilence, or barbarity; he shall grieve for the inhabitants of the moon, if the situation of her imaginary mountains happens to alter; and dread the extinction of the sun, if the spots on his surface happen to increase. One should imagine that philosophy was introduced to make men happy, but here it serves to make hundreds miserable.

My landlady, some days ago, brought me the diary of a philosopher of this desponding sort, who had lodged in the apartment before me. It contains the history of a life which

seems to be one continued tissue of sorrow, apprehension, and distress. A single week will serve as a specimen of the whole:

"*Monday.*—In what a transient, decaying situation are we placed; and what various reasons does philosophy furnish to make mankind unhappy! A single grain of mustard shall continue to produce its similitude through numberless successions; yet what has been granted to this little seed has been denied to our planetary system: the mustard-seed is still unaltered, but the system is growing old, and must quickly fall to decay. How terrible will it be when the motions of all the planets have at last become so irregular as to need repairing; when the moon shall fall into frightful paroxysms of alteration; when the earth, deviating from its ancient track, and, with every other planet, forgetting its circular revolutions, shall become so eccentric that, unconfined by the laws of system, it shall fly off into boundless space, to knock against some distant world, or fall in upon the sun, either extinguishing his light or burnt up by his flames in a moment! Perhaps, while I write, this dreadful change is begun. Shield me from universal ruin! Yet idiot man laughs, sings, and rejoices, in the very face of the sun, and seems no way touched with his situation.

"*Tuesday.*—Went to bed in great distress; awaked, and was comforted by considering that this change was to happen at some indefinite time; and therefore, like death, the thoughts of it might easily be borne. But there is a revolution, a fixed, determined revolution, which must certainly come to pass; yet which, by good-fortune, I shall never feel, except in my posterity. The obliquity of the equator with the ecliptic is now twenty minutes less than when it was observed two thousand years ago by Piteas. If this be the case, in six thousand the obliquity will be still less by a whole degree. This being supposed, it is evident that our earth, as Louville has clearly proved, has a motion by which the climates must necessarily change place, and in the space of about one million of years England shall actually travel to the Antarctic pole. I shudder at the change! How shall our unhappy grandchildren endure the hideous climate? A million of years

will soon be accomplished—they are but a moment when compared to eternity: then shall our charming country, as I may say, in a moment of time resemble the hideous wilderness of Nova Zembla.

"*Wednesday.*—To-night, by my calculation, the long-predicted comet is to make its first appearance. Heavens! what terrors are impending over our little dim speck of earth! Dreadful visitation! Are we to be scorched in its fires, or only smothered in the vapor of its tail? That is the question. Thoughtless mortals! go build houses, plant orchards, purchase estates, for to-morrow you die. But what if the comet should not come? That would be equally fatal. Comets are servants which periodically return to supply the sun with fuel. If our sun, therefore, should be disappointed of the expected supply, and all his fuel be in the mean time burnt out, he must expire like an exhausted taper. What a miserable situation must our earth be in without his enlivening ray! Have we not seen several neighboring suns entirely disappear? Has not a fixed star, near the tail of the Ram, lately been quite extinguished?

"*Thursday.*—The comet has not yet appeared. I am sorry for it: first, sorry because my calculation is false; secondly, sorry lest the sun should want fuel; thirdly, sorry lest the wits should laugh at our erroneous predictions; and fourthly, sorry because, if it appears to-night, it must necessarily come within the sphere of the earth's attraction; and Heaven help the unhappy country on which it happens to fall!

"*Friday.*—Our whole society have been out, all eager in search of the comet. We have seen not less than sixteen comets in different parts of the heavens. However, we are unanimously resolved to fix upon one only to be the comet expected. That near Virgo wants nothing but a tail to fit it out completely for terrestrial admiration.

"*Saturday.*—The moon is, I find, at her old pranks. Her appulses, librations, and other irregularities indeed amaze me. My daughter, too, is this morning gone off with a grenadier. No way surprising; I was never able to give her a relish for wisdom. She ever promised to be a mere expletive in the

Chesterfield

creation. But the moon, the moon gives me real uneasiness; I fondly fancied I had fixed her. I had thought her constant, and constant only to me; but every night discovers her infidelity, and proves me a desolate and abandoned lover." Adieu.

LETTER XCIII.

THE FONDNESS OF SOME TO ADMIRE THE WRITINGS OF LORDS, ETC.

To the Same.

It is surprising what an influence titles shall have upon the mind, even though these titles be of our own making. Like children, we dress up the puppets in finery, and then stand in astonishment at the plastic wonder. I have been told of a rat-catcher here who strolled for a long time about the villages near town without finding any employment: at last, however, he thought proper to take the title of his Majesty's Rat-catcher in Ordinary, and thus succeeded beyond his expectations: when it was known that he caught rats at court, all were ready to give him countenance and employment.

But of all the people, they who make books seem most perfectly sensible of the advantage of titular dignity. All seem convinced that a book written by vulgar hands can neither instruct nor improve; none but kings, chams, and mandarins can write with any probability of success.[1] If the titles inform me right, not only kings and courtiers, but emperors themselves, in this country periodically supply the Press.

A man here who should write, and honestly confess that he wrote for bread, might as well send his manuscript to fire the baker's oven; not one creature will read him: all must be court-bred poets, or pretend at least to be court-bred, who can

[1] Goldsmith, in his necessities, compiled a "History of England" in a series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son, and the immediate and large sale of the work was owing more to the title than the execution. The letters were said to be Lord Chesterfield's, or at least Lord Lyttelton's. As Oliver Goldsmith's they would then (1764) have had but a slender sale, if, indeed, they would have found a publisher.

expect to please. Should the caitiff fairly avow a design of emptying our pockets and filling his own, every reader would instantly forsake him; even those who write for bread themselves would combine to worry him, perfectly sensible that his attempts only served to take the bread out of their mouths.

And yet this silly prepossession the more amazes me, when I consider that almost all the excellent productions in wit that have appeared here were purely the offspring of necessity; their Drydens, Butlers, Otways, and Farquhars were all writers for bread.[1] Believe me, my friend, hunger has a most amazing faculty of sharpening the genius; and he who with a full belly can think like a hero, after a course of fasting shall rise to the sublimity of a demigod.

But what will most amaze is, that this very set of men, who are now so much depreciated by fools, are, however, the very best writers they have among them at present. For my own part, were I to buy a hat, I would not have it from a stocking-maker, but a hatter; were I to buy shoes, I should not go to the tailor's for that purpose. It is just so with regard to wit: did I, for my life, desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade and lived by it. You smile at the oddity of my opinion; but be assured, my friend, that wit is in some measure mechanical, and that a man long habituated to catch at even its resemblance will at last be happy enough to possess the substance. By a long habit of writing he acquires a justness of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which holiday-writers, even with ten times his genius, may vainly attempt to equal.

How, then, are they deceived who expect from title, dignity, and exterior circumstance an excellence which is in some measure acquired by habit and sharpened by necessity! You have seen, like me, many literary reputations promoted by

[1] "I have many a fatigue to encounter before that happy time comes when your poor old, simple friend may again give a loose to the luxuriance of his nature, sitting by the fireside at Kilmore; recount the various adventures of a hard-fought life; laugh over the follies of the day; join his flute to your harpsichord; and forget that he ever starved in those streets where Butler and Otway starved before him."—GOLDSMITH *to Mrs. Lawder*, August, 1758.

the influence of fashion, which have scarce survived the possessor; you have seen the poor hardly earn the little reputation they acquired, and their merit only acknowledged when they were incapable of enjoying the pleasures of popularity: such, however, is the reputation worth possessing; that which is hardly earned is hardly lost. Adieu.

LETTER XCIV.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SON IS AGAIN SEPARATED FROM HIS BEAUTIFUL COMPANION.

From Hingpo, in Moscow, to Lien Chi Altangi, in London.

WHERE will my disappointments end? Must I still be doomed to accuse the severity of my fortune, and show my constancy in distress, rather than moderation in prosperity? I had at least hopes of conveying my charming companion safe from the reach of every enemy, and of again restoring her to her native soil. But those hopes are now no more.

Upon leaving Terki we took the nearest road to the dominions of Russia. We passed the Ural mountains, covered with eternal snow, and traversed the forests of Ufa, where the prowling bear and shrieking hyena keep an undisputed possession. We next embarked upon the rapid river Bulija, and made the best of our way to the banks of the Wolga, where it waters the fruitful valleys of Casan.

There were two vessels in company, properly equipped and armed, in order to oppose the Wolga pirates, who, we were informed, infested this river. Of all mankind these pirates are the most terrible. They are composed of the criminals and outlawed peasants of Russia, who fly to the forests that lie along the banks of the Wolga for protection. Here they join in parties, lead a savage life, and have no other subsistence but plunder. Being deprived of houses, friends, or a fixed habitation, they become more terrible even than the tiger, and as insensible to all the feelings of humanity. They neither

Men complain of not finding a place of repose. They are in the wrong; they have it for seeking. What they should indeed complain of is that the heart is an enemy to that very repose they seek. To themselves alone should they impute their discontent. They seek within the short span of life to satisfy a thousand desires, each of which alone is unsatiable. One month passes and another comes on; the year ends and then begins; but man is still unchanging in folly,[1] still blindly continuing in prejudice. To the wise man every climate and every soil is pleasing; to him a parterre of flowers is the famous valley of gold; to him a little brook *the fountain of the young peach-trees;*[2] to such a man the melody of birds is more ravishing than the harmony of a full concert, and the tincture of the cloud preferable to the touch of the finest pencil.

The life of man is a journey—a journey that must be travelled, however bad the roads or the accommodation. If in the beginning it is found dangerous, narrow, and difficult, it must either grow better in the end, or we shall by custom learn to bear its inequality.

But, though I see you incapable of penetrating into grand principles, attend at least to a simile adapted to every apprehension. I am mounted upon a wretched ass. I see another man before me upon a sprightly horse, at which I find some uneasiness. I look behind me, and see numbers on foot, stooping under heavy burdens; let me learn to pity their estate, and thank Heaven for my own.

Shingfu, when under misfortunes, would in the beginning weep like a child; but he soon recovered his former tranquillity. After indulging grief for a few days he would become, as usual, the most merry old man in all the province of Shansi. About the time that his wife died his possessions

[1] "The lapse of ages changes all things — time—language — the earth — the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and everything about, around, and underneath man, except man himself; who has always been and always will be an unlucky rascal. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment."—BYRON, *Works*, vol. v. p. 66, ed. 1832.

[2] This passage the editor does not understand.—GOLDSMITH.

were all consumed by fire, and his only son sold into captivity; Shingfu grieved for one day, and the next went to dance at a mandarin's door for his dinner. The company were surprised to see the old man so merry when suffering such great losses; and the mandarin himself, coming out, asked him how he, who had grieved so much and given way to the calamity the day before, could now be so cheerful? "You ask me one question," cries the old man; "let me answer by asking another: which is the most durable, a hard thing or a soft thing; that which resists, or that which makes no resistance?" "A hard thing, to be sure," replied the mandarin. "There you are wrong," returned Shingfu. "I am now fourscore years old; and if you look in my mouth you will find that I have lost all my teeth, but not a bit of my tongue." Adieu.

LETTER XCVI.

THE CONDOLENCE AND CONGRATULATION UPON THE DEATH OF THE LATE KING RIDICULED.—ENGLISH MOURNING DESCRIBED.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

THE manner of grieving for our departed friends in China is very different from that of Europe. The mourning color of Europe is black, that of China white. When a parent or relation dies here, for they seldom mourn for friends, it is only clapping on a suit of sables, grimacing in it for a few days, and all, soon forgotten, goes on as before; not a single creature missing the deceased, except, perhaps, a favorite house-keeper or a favorite cat.

On the contrary, with us in China it is a very serious affair. The piety with which I have seen you behave on one of these occasions should never be forgotten. I remember it was upon the death of thy grandmother's maiden sister. The coffin was exposed in the principal hall in public view; before it were placed the figures of eunuchs, horses, tortoises, and other

animals, in attitudes of grief and respect. The more distant relations of the old lady, and I among the number, came to pay our compliments of condolence, and to salute the deceased after the manner of our country. We had scarce presented our wax-candles and perfumes, and given the howl of departure,[1] when, crawling on his belly from under a curtain, out came the reverend Fum Hoam himself, in all the dismal solemnity of distress. Your looks were set for sorrow; your clothing consisted of a hempen bag tied round the neck with a string. For two long months did this mourning continue. By night you lay stretched on a single mat, and sat on the stool of discontent by day. Pious man! who could thus set an example of sorrow and decorum to our country. Pious country! where, if we do not grieve at the departure of our friends for their sakes, at least we are taught to regret them for our own.

All is very different here; amazement all! What sort of a people am I got among? Fum, thou son of Fo, what sort of people am I got among? No crawling round the coffin, no dressing up in hempen bags, no lying on mats, or sitting on stools! Gentlemen here shall put on first mourning with as sprightly an air as if preparing for a birth-night; and widows shall actually dress for another husband in their weeds for the former. The best jest of all is, that our merry mourners clap bits of muslin on their sleeves, and these are called weepers. Weeping muslin! alas, alas, very sorrowful truly! These weepers, then, it seems, are to bear the whole burden of the distress.

But I have had the strongest instance of this contrast, this tragi-comical behavior in distress, upon a recent occasion. Their king,[2] whose departure though sudden was not unexpected, died after a reign of many years. His age and un-

[1] "When a parent or elder relation among the Chinese dies, the lineal descendants, clothed in white cloth, with bandages of the same color round their heads, sit weeping round the corpse on the ground, the women keeping up a dismal howl, after the manner of the Irish."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 295.

[2] George the Second, who died October 25, 1760, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and the thirty-fourth of his reign.

certain state of health served, in some measure, to diminish the sorrow of his subjects; and their expectations from his successor seemed to balance their minds between uneasiness and satisfaction. But how ought they to have behaved on such an occasion? Surely, they ought rather to have endeavored to testify their gratitude to their deceased friend than to proclaim their hopes of the future! Sure, even the successor must suppose their love to wear the face of adulation, which so quickly changed the object! However, the very same day on which the old king died they made rejoicing for the new.

For my part, I have no conception of this new manner of mourning and rejoicing in a breath, of being merry and sad, of mixing a funeral procession with a jig and a bonfire. At least it would have been just that they who flattered the king while living for virtues which he had not, should lament him dead for those he really had.

In this universal cause for national distress, as I had no interest myself, so it is but natural to suppose I felt no real affliction. "In all the losses of our friends," says a European philosopher, "we first consider how much our own welfare is affected by their departure, and moderate our real grief just in the same proportion."[1] Now, as I had neither received nor expected to receive favors from kings or their flatterers—as I had no acquaintance in particular with the late monarch—as I know that the place of a king is soon supplied—and, as the Chinese proverb has it, that though the world may sometimes want cobblers to mend their shoes, there is no danger of its wanting emperors to rule their kingdoms—from such considerations I could bear the loss of a king with the most philosophic resignation. However, I thought it my duty at least

[1] "Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplait pas."—*Rochefoucault.*

"In all distresses of our friends,
We first consult our private ends;
While Nature, kindly bent to ease us,
Points out some circumstance to please us."

SWIFT, *On his own Death.*

to appear sorrowful, to put on a melancholy aspect, or to set my face by that of the people.

The first company I came among after the news became general was a set of jolly companions, who were drinking prosperity to the ensuing reign. I entered the room with looks of despair, and even expected applause for the superlative misery of my countenance. Instead of that, I was universally condemned by the company for a grimacing son of a whore, and desired to take away my penitential phiz to some other quarter. I now corrected my former mistake, and with the most sprightly air imaginable entered a company where they were talking over the ceremonies of the approaching funeral. Here I sat for some time with an air of pert vivacity, when one of the chief mourners, immediately observing my good-humor, desired me, if I pleased, to go and grin somewhere else; they wanted no disaffected scoundrels there. Leaving this company, therefore, I was resolved to assume a look perfectly neutral, and have ever since been studying the fashionable air—something between jest and earnest; a complete virginity of face, uncontaminated with the smallest symptom of meaning.

But though grief be a very slight affair here, the mourning, my friend, is a very important concern. When an emperor dies in China, the whole expense of the solemnities is defrayed from the royal coffers. When the great die here, mandarins are ready enough to order mourning, but I do not see that they are so ready to pay for it. If they send me down from court the gray undress-frock, or the black coat without pocket-holes, I am willing enough to comply with their commands, and wear both; but, by the head of Confucius! to be obliged to wear black, and buy it into the bargain, is more than my tranquillity of temper can bear. What! order me to wear mourning before they know whether I can buy it or no! Fum, thou son of Fo, what sort of a people am I got among? where being out of black is a certain symptom of poverty; where those who have miserable faces cannot have mourning, and those who have mourning will not wear a miserable face!

LETTER XCVII.

ALMOST EVERY SUBJECT OF LITERATURE HAS BEEN ALREADY EXHAUSTED.

From the Same.

It is usual for the booksellers here, when a book has given universal pleasure upon one subject, to bring out several more upon the same plan; which are sure to have purchasers and readers, from that desire which all men have to view a pleasing object on every side. The first performance serves rather to awaken than satisfy attention; and when that is once moved the slightest effort serves to continue its progression: the merit of the first diffuses a light sufficient to illuminate the succeeding efforts; and no other subject can be relished till that is exhausted. A stupid work, coming thus immediately in the train of an applauded performance, weans the mind from the object of its pleasure; and resembles the sponge thrust into the mouth of a discharged culverin, in order to adapt it for a new explosion.

This manner, however, of drawing off a subject, or a peculiar mode of writing, to the dregs, effectually precludes a revival of that subject or manner for some time for the future: the sated reader turns from it with a kind of literary nausea, and though the titles of books are the part of them most read, yet he has scarce perseverance enough to wade through the title-page.

Of this number I own myself one. I am now grown callous to several subjects and different kinds of composition. Whether such originally pleased I will not take upon me to determine; but at present I spurn a new book merely upon seeing its name in an advertisement; nor have the smallest curiosity to look beyond the first leaf, even though in the

second the author promises his own face "neatly engraved on copper."

I am become a perfect epicure in reading; plain beef or solid mutton will never do. I am for a Chinese dish of bears' claws and birds' nests. I am for sauce strong with assafœtida or fuming with garlic. For this reason, there are a hundred very wise, learned, virtuous, well-intended productions that have no charms for me. Thus, for the soul of me, I could never find courage nor grace enough to wade above two pages deep into "Thoughts upon God and Nature," or "Thoughts upon Providence," or "Thoughts upon Free Grace," or indeed into "Thoughts" upon anything at all. I can no longer meditate with "Meditations for Every Day in the Year." "Essays upon Divers Subjects" cannot allure me, though never so interesting; and as for Funeral Sermons, or even Thanksgiving Sermons, I can neither weep with the one nor rejoice with the other.

But it is chiefly in gentle poetry where I seldom look farther than the title. The truth is, I take up books to be told something new; but here, as it is now managed, the reader is told nothing. He opens the book, and there finds very good words truly, and much exactness of rhyme, but no information. A parcel of gaudy images pass on before his imagination like the figures in a dream; but curiosity, induction, reason, and the whole train of affections are fast asleep. The *jucunda et idonea vitæ*, those sallies which mend the heart while they amuse the fancy, are quite forgotten; so that a reader who would take up some modern applauded performances of this kind must, in order to be pleased, first leave his good-sense behind him, take for his recompense and guide bloated and compound epithet, and dwell on paintings, just, indeed, because labored with minute exactness.

If we examine, however, our internal sensations, we shall find ourselves but little pleased with such labored vanities; we shall find that our applause rather proceeds from a kind of contagion caught up from others, and which we contribute to diffuse, than from what we privately feel. There are some subjects of which almost all the world perceive the futility,

yet all combine in imposing them upon each other as worthy of praise. But chiefly this imposition obtains in literature, where men publicly contemn what they relish with rapture in private, and approve abroad what has given them disgust at home. The truth is, we deliver those criticisms in public which are supposed to be best calculated, not to do justice to the author, but to impress others with an opinion of our superior discernment.

But let works of this kind, which have already come off with such applause, enjoy it all. It is neither my wish to diminish, as I was never considerable enough to add to, their fame. But, for the future, I fear there are many poems of which I shall find spirits to read but the title. In the first place, all odes upon winter, or summer, or autumn; in short, all odes, epodes, and monodies whatsoever, shall hereafter be deemed too polite, classical, obscure, and refined to be read, and entirely above human comprehension. Pastorals are pretty enough—for those that like them; but to me Thyrsis is one of the most insipid fellows I ever conversed with; and, as for Corydon, I do not choose his company. Elegies and epistles are very fine to those to whom they are addressed; and as for epic poems, I am generally able to discover the whole plan in reading the two first pages.

Tragedies, however, as they are now made, are good, instructive, moral sermons enough; and it would be a fault not to be pleased with good things. There I learn several great truths; as, that it is impossible to see into the ways of futurity; that punishment always attends the villain; that love is the fond soother of the human breast; that we should not resist Heaven's will, for in resisting Heaven's will Heaven's will is resisted; with several other sentiments equally new, delicate, and striking. Every new tragedy, therefore, I shall go to see; for reflections of this nature make a tolerable harmony, when mixed up with a proper quantity of drum, trumpet, thunder, lightning, or the scene-shifter's whistle. Adieu.

LETTER XCVIII.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COURTS OF JUSTICE IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

I HAD some intentions lately of going to visit Bedlam, the place where those who go mad are confined. I went to wait upon the man in black to be my conductor; but I found him preparing to go to Westminster Hall, where the English hold their courts of justice. It gave me some surprise to find my friend engaged in a lawsuit, but more so when he informed me that it had been depending for several years. "How is it possible," cried I, "for a man who knows the world to go to law? I am well acquainted with the courts of justice in China; they resemble rat-traps every one of them—nothing more easy than to get in, but to get out again is attended with some difficulty, and more cunning than rats are generally found to possess."

"Faith," replied my friend, "I should not have gone to law but that I was assured of success before I began; things were presented to me in so alluring a light that I thought by barely declaring myself a candidate for the prize I had nothing more to do than to enjoy the fruits of the victory. Thus have I been upon the eve of an imaginary triumph every term these ten years—have travelled forward with victory ever in my view, but ever out of reach; however, at present, I fancy we have hampered our antagonist in such a manner that, without some unforeseen demur, we shall this day lay him fairly on his back."

"If things be so situated," said I, "I do not care if I attend you to the courts, and partake in the pleasure of your

success. But prithee," continued I, as we set forward, "what reasons have you to think an affair at last concluded which has given you so many former disappointments?" "My lawyer tells me," returned he, "that I have Salkeld and Ventris strong in my favor, and that there are no less than fifteen cases in point." "I understand," said I: "those are two of your judges who have already declared their opinions." "Pardon me," replied my friend, "Salkeld and Ventris are lawyers who, some hundred years ago, gave their opinions on cases similar to mine; these opinions which make for me my lawyer is to cite, and those opinions which look another way are cited by the lawyer employed by my antagonist; as I observed, I have Salkeld and Ventris for me, he has Coke and Hale for him; and he that has most opinions is most likely to carry his cause." "But where is the necessity," cried I, "of prolonging a suit by citing the opinions and reports of others, since the same good-sense which determined lawyers in former ages may serve to guide your judges at this day? They at that time gave their opinions only from the light of reason; your judges have the same light at present to direct them; let me even add, a greater, as in former ages there were many prejudices from which the present is happily free. If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? I plainly foresee how such a method of investigation must embarrass every suit, and even perplex the student; ceremonies will be multiplied, formalities must increase, and more time will thus be spent in learning the arts of litigation than in the discovery of right."

"I see," cries my friend, "that you are for a speedy administration of justice; but all the world will grant that the more time that is taken up in considering any subject the better it will be understood. Besides, it is the boast of an Englishman that his property is secure, and all the world will grant that a deliberate administration of justice is the best way to secure his property. Why have we so many lawyers but to secure our property? why so many formalities but to secure our property? Not less than one hundred thousand families

live in opulence, elegance, and ease merely by securing our property."

"To embarrass justice," returned I, "by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by a confidence in our judges, are, I grant, the opposite rocks on which legislative wisdom has ever split: in one case the client resembles that emperor who is said to have been suffocated with the bedclothes which were only designed to keep him warm; in the other to that town which let the enemy take possession of its walls, in order to show the world how little they depended upon aught but courage for safety. But, bless me! what numbers do I see here, all in black—how is it possible that half this multitude find employment?" "Nothing so easily conceived," returned my companion; "they live by watching each other. For instance, the catchpole watches the man in debt, the attorney watches the catchpole, the counsellor watches the attorney, the solicitor the counsellor, and all find sufficient employment." "I conceive you," interrupted I; "they watch each other, but it is the client that pays them all for watching. It puts me in mind of a Chinese fable, which is entitled 'Five Animals at a Meal.'

"A grasshopper filled with dew was merrily singing under a shade; a whangam, that eats grasshoppers, had marked it for its prey, and was just stretching forth to devour it; a serpent, that had for a long time fed only on whangams, was coiled up to fasten on the whangam; a yellow bird was just upon the wing to dart upon the serpent; a hawk had just stooped from above to seize the yellow bird; all were intent on their prey, and unmindful of their danger; so the whangam ate the grasshopper, the serpent ate the whangam, the yellow bird the serpent, and the hawk the yellow bird; when, sousing from on high, a vulture gobbled up the hawk, grasshopper, whangam, and all in a moment."

I had scarce finished my fable when the lawyer came to inform my friend that his cause was put off till another term; that money was wanted to retain, and that all the world was of opinion that the very next hearing would bring him off victorious. "If so, then," cries my friend, "I believe it will

be my wisest way to continue the cause for another term; and, in the mean time, my friend here and I will go and see Bedlam." Adieu.

LETTER XCIX.

A VISIT FROM THE LITTLE BEAU.—THE INDULGENCE WITH WHICH THE FAIR SEX ARE TREATED IN SEVERAL PARTS OF ASIA.

From the Same.

I LATELY received a visit from the little beau, who I found had assumed a new flow of spirits with a new suit of clothes. Our discourse happened to turn upon the different treatment of the fair sex here and in Asia, with the influence of beauty in refining our manners and improving our conversation.

I soon perceived he was strongly prejudiced in favor of the Asiatic method of treating the sex, and that it was impossible to persuade him but that a man was happier who had four wives at his command than he who had only one. "It is true," cries he, "your men of fashion in the East are slaves, and under some terror of having their throats squeezed by a bowstring; but what then? they can find ample consolation in a seraglio; they make, indeed, an indifferent figure in conversation abroad, but then they have a seraglio to console them at home. I am told they have no balls, drums, nor operas, but then they have got a seraglio; they may be deprived of wine and French cookery, but they have a seraglio. A seraglio, a seraglio, my dear creature, wipes off every inconvenience in the world.

"Besides, I am told, your Asiatic beauties are the most convenient women alive, for they have no souls: positively there is nothing in nature I should like so much as ladies without souls; soul here is the utter ruin of half the sex. A girl of eighteen shall have soul enough to spend a hundred pounds in the turning of a trump. Her mother shall have soul enough to ride a sweepstake match at a horse-race; her maiden aunt shall have soul enough to purchase the furniture

of a whole toy-shop; and others shall have soul enough to behave as if they had no souls at all."

"With respect to the soul," interrupted I, "the Asiatics are much kinder to the fair sex than you imagine; instead of one soul, Fohi, the idol of China, gives every woman three; the Bramins give them fifteen; and even Mohammed himself nowhere excludes the sex from paradise. Abulfeda[1] reports that an old woman one day importuning him to know what she ought to do in order to gain paradise: 'My good lady,' answered the prophet, 'old women never get there.' 'What! never get to paradise!' returned the matron, in a fury. 'Never,' says he, 'for they always grow young by the way.'

"No, sir," continued I, "the men of Asia behave with more deference to the sex than you seem to imagine. As you of Europe say grace upon sitting down to dinner, so it is the custom in China to say grace when a man goes to bed to his wife." "And may I die," returned my companion, "but it is a very pretty ceremony; for, seriously, sir, I see no reason why a man should not be as grateful in one situation as in the other. Upon honor, I always find myself much more disposed to gratitude on the couch of a fine woman than upon sitting down to a sirloin of beef."

"Another ceremony," said I, resuming the conversation, "in favor of the sex among us is, the bride's being allowed after marriage her three days of freedom. During this interval a thousand extravagances are practised by either sex. The lady is placed upon the nuptial bed, and numberless monkey tricks are played round to divert her. One gentleman smells her perfumed handkerchief, another attempts to untie her garters, a third pulls off her shoe to play hunt the slipper, another pretends to be an idiot, and endeavors to raise a laugh by grimacing; in the mean time the glass goes briskly about, till ladies, gentlemen, wife, husband, and all are mixed together in one inundation of arrack punch."

"Strike me dumb, deaf, and blind," cried my companion,

[1] Ismael Abulfeda, a learned geographer and historian, born at Damascus in 1273; died 1331. His "Life of Mohammed" was printed at Oxford in 1723.

"but that's very pretty! There's some sense in your Chinese ladies' condescensions; but among us you shall scarcely find one of the whole sex that shall hold her good-humor for three days together. No later than yesterday I happened to say some civil things to a citizen's wife of my acquaintance, not because I loved, but because I had charity; and, what do you think was the tender creature's reply? Only that she detested my pig-tail wig, high-heeled shoes, and sallow complexion! That is all—nothing more! Yes, by the heavens, though she was more ugly than an unpainted actress, I found her more insolent than a thorough-bred woman of quality!"

He was proceeding in this wild manner, when his invective was interrupted by the man in black, who entered the apartment, introducing his niece, a young lady of exquisite beauty. Her very appearance was sufficient to silence the severest satirist of the sex; easy without pride and free without impudence, she seemed capable of supplying every sense with pleasure; her looks, her conversation were natural and unconstrained; she had neither been taught to languish nor ogle, to laugh without a jest or sigh without sorrow. I found that she had just returned from abroad, and had been conversant in the manners of the world. Curiosity prompted me to ask several questions, but she declined them all. I own I never found myself so strongly prejudiced in favor of apparent merit before; and could willingly have prolonged our conversation, but the company after some time withdrew. Just, however, before the little beau took his leave he called me aside, and requested I would change him a twenty-pound bill; which, as I was incapable of doing, he was contented with borrowing half a crown. Adieu.

some countries, and despicable in all; this universal contempt of a man who infringes upon none of the laws of society some moralists have arraigned as a popular and unjust prejudice, never considering the necessary degradations a wretch must undergo who previously expects to grow rich by benefits, without having either natural or social claims to enforce his petitions.

But this intercourse of benefaction and acknowledgment is often injurious, even to the giver as well as the receiver. A man can gain but little knowledge of himself or of the world amid a circle of those whom hope or gratitude has gathered round him; their unceasing humiliations must necessarily increase his comparative magnitude, for all men measure their own abilities by those of their company; thus, being taught to overrate his merit, he in reality lessens it; increasing in confidence, but not in power, his professions end in empty boast, his undertakings in shameful disappointment.

It is perhaps one of the severest misfortunes of the great that they are, in general, obliged to live among men whose real virtue is lessened by dependence, and whose minds are enslaved by obligation. The humble companion may have at first accepted patronage with generous views; but soon he feels the mortifying influence of conscious inferiority, by degrees sinks into a flatterer, and from flattery at last degenerates into stupid veneration. To remedy this, the great often dismiss their old dependents and take new. Such changes are falsely imputed to levity, falsehood, or caprice in the patron, since they may be more justly ascribed to the client's gradual deterioration.

No, my son, a life of independence is generally a life of virtue. It is that which fits the soul for every generous flight of humanity, freedom, and friendship. To give should be our pleasure, but to receive, our shame; serenity, health, and affluence attend the desire of rising by labor; misery, repentance, and disrespect that of succeeding by extorted benevolence. The man who can thank himself alone for the happiness he enjoys is truly blest; and lovely, far more lovely, the sturdy gloom of laborious indigence than the fawning simper of thriving adulation. Adieu.

LETTER CI.

THE PEOPLE MUST BE CONTENTED TO BE GUIDED BY THOSE WHOM THEY HAVE APPOINTED TO GOVERN.—A STORY TO THIS EFFECT.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.

In every society some men are born to teach and others to receive instruction; some to work, and others to enjoy in idleness the fruits of their industry; some to govern, and others to obey. Every people, how free so ever, must be contented to give up part of their liberty and judgment to those who govern, in exchange for their hopes of security; and the motives which first influenced their choice in the election of their governors should ever be weighed against the succeeding apparent inconsistencies of their conduct. All cannot be rulers, and men are generally best governed by a few. In making way through the intricacies of business the smallest obstacles are apt to retard the execution of what is to be planned by a multiplicity of counsels; the judgment of one alone being always fittest for winding through the labyrinths of intrigue and the obstructions of disappointment. A serpent which as the fable observes, is furnished with one head and many tails, is much more capable of subsistence and expedition than another which is furnished with but one tail and many heads.

Obvious as these truths are, the people of this country seem insensible of their force. Not satisfied with the advantages of internal peace and opulence, they still murmur at their governors and interfere in the execution of their designs, as if they wanted to be something more than happy. But as the Europeans instruct by argument, and the Asiatics mostly by narration, were I to address them, I should convey my sentiments in the following story:

"Takupi had long been Prime-minister of Tipartala, a fertile country that stretches along the western confines of China. During his administration whatever advantages could be derived from arts, learning, and commerce were seen to bless the people; nor were the necessary precautions of providing for the security of the state forgotten. It often happens, however, that when men are possessed of all they want, they then begin to find torment from imaginary afflictions, and lessen their present enjoyments by foreboding that those enjoyments are to have an end. The people now, therefore, endeavored to find out grievances; and, after some search, actually began to think themselves aggrieved. A petition against the enormities of Takupi was carried to the throne in due form; and the queen who governed the country, willing to satisfy her subjects, appointed a day in which his accusers should be heard and the minister should stand upon his defence.

"The day being arrived, and the minister brought before the tribunal, a carrier, who supplied the city with fish, appeared among the number of his accusers. He exclaimed that it was the custom, time immemorial, for carriers to bring their fish upon a horse in a hamper; which, being placed on one side, and balanced by a stone on the other, was thus conveyed with ease and safety; but that the prisoner, moved either by a spirit of innovation, or perhaps bribed by the hamper-makers, had obliged all carriers to use the stone no longer, but balance one hamper with another—an order entirely repugnant to the customs of all antiquity, and those of the kingdom of Tipartala in particular.

"The carrier finished, and the whole court shook their heads at the innovating minister, when a second witness appeared. He was inspector of the city buildings, and accused the disgraced favorite of having given orders for the demolition of an ancient ruin, which obstructed the passage through one of the principal streets. He observed that such buildings were noble monuments of barbarous antiquity—contributed finely to show how little their ancestors understood of architecture; and for that reason such monuments should be held sacred, and suffered gradually to decay.

"The last witness now appeared. This was a widow, who had laudably attempted to burn herself upon her husband's funeral pile. But the innovating minister had prevented the execution of her design, and was insensible to her tears, protestations, and entreaties.

"The queen could have pardoned the two former offences; but this last was considered as so gross an injury to the sex, and so directly contrary to all the customs of antiquity, that it called for immediate justice. 'What!' cried the queen, 'not suffer a woman to burn herself when she thinks proper? The sex are to be very prettily tutored, no doubt, if they must be restrained from entertaining their female friends now and then with a fried wife or roasted acquaintance. I sentence the criminal to be banished my presence forever, for his injurious treatment of the sex.'

"Takupi had been hitherto silent, and spoke only to show the sincerity of his resignation. 'Great queen,' cried he, 'I acknowledge my crime, and since I am to be banished, I beg it may be to some ruined town or desolate village in the country I have governed. I shall find some pleasure in improving the soil, and bringing back a spirit of industry among the inhabitants.' His request appearing reasonable, it was immediately complied with, and a courtier had orders to fix upon a place of banishment answering the minister's description. After some months' search, however, the inquiry proved fruitless; neither a desolate village nor a ruined town was found in the whole kingdom. 'Alas,' said Takupi then to the queen, 'how can that country be ill-governed which has neither a desolate village nor a ruined town in it?' The queen perceived the justice of his expostulation, and the minister was received into more than former favor."

LETTER CII.

THE PASSION FOR GAMING AMONG LADIES RIDICULED.

From the Same.

The ladies here are by no means such ardent gamesters as the women of Asia. In this respect I must do the English justice; for I love to praise where applause is justly merited. Nothing is more common in China than to see two women of fashion continue gaming till one has won all the other's clothes and stripped her quite naked; the winner thus marching off in a double suit of finery, and the loser shrinking behind in the primitive simplicity of nature.

No doubt you remember when Shang, our maiden aunt, played with a sharper. First her money went; then her trinkets were produced; her clothes followed, piece by piece, soon after; when she had thus played herself quite naked, being a woman of spirit, and willing to pursue her own, she staked her teeth. Fortune was against her even here, and her teeth followed her clothes; at last she played for her left eye, and, oh hard fate! this, too, she lost; however, she had the consolation of biting the sharper, for he never perceived that it was made of glass till it became his own.

How happy, my friend, are the English ladies, who never rise to such an inordinance of passion! Though the sex here are naturally fond of games of chance, and are taught to manage games of skill from their infancy, yet they never pursue ill-fortune with such amazing intrepidity. Indeed, I may entirely acquit them of ever playing—I mean, playing for their eyes or their teeth.

It is true, they often stake their fortune, their beauty, health, and reputation at a gaming-table. It even sometimes happens that they play their husbands into a jail; yet still they preserve a decorum unknown to our wives and daugh-

ters of China. I have been present at a rout in this country, where a woman of fashion, after losing her money, has sat writhing in all the agonies of bad-luck; and yet, after all, never once attempted to strip a single petticoat, or cover the board, as her last stake, with her head-clothes.

However, though I praise their moderation at play, I must not conceal their assiduity. In China our women, except upon some great days, are never permitted to finger a dice-box; but here every day seems to be a festival; and night itself, which gives others rest, only serves to increase the female gamester's industry. I have been told of an old lady in the country who, being given over by the physicians, played with the curate of her parish to pass the time away; having won all his money, she next proposed playing for her funeral charges; the proposal was accepted, but, unfortunately, the lady expired just as she had taken in her game.

There are some passions which, though differently pursued, are attended with equal consequences in every country. Here they game with more perseverance, there with greater fury; here they strip their families, there they strip themselves naked. A lady in China who indulges a passion for gaming often becomes a drunkard; and by flourishing a dice-box in one hand she generally comes to brandish a dram-cup in the other. Far be it from me to say there are any who drink drams in England; but it is natural to suppose that when a lady has lost everything else but her honor, she will be apt to toss that into the bargain; and, grown insensible to nicer feelings, behave like the Spaniard who, when all his money was gone, endeavored to borrow more by offering to pawn his whiskers. Adieu.



LETTER CIII.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER BEGINS TO THINK OF QUITTING ENGLAND.

From Lien Chi Altangi to ——, Merchant in Amsterdam.

I HAVE just received a letter from my son, in which he informs me of the fruitlessness of his endeavors to recover the lady with whom he fled from Persia. He strives to cover, under the appearance of fortitude, a heart torn with anxiety and disappointment. I have offered little consolation, since that but too frequently feeds the sorrow which it pretends to deplore, and strengthens the impression which nothing but the external rubs of time and accident can thoroughly efface.

He informs me of his intention of quitting Moscow the first opportunity, and travelling by land to Amsterdam. I must, therefore, upon his arrival, entreat the continuance of your friendship, and beg of you to provide him with proper directions for finding me in London. You can scarcely be sensible of the joy I expect upon seeing him once more: the ties between the father and the son among us of China are much more closely drawn than with you of Europe.

The remittances sent me from Argun to Moscow came in safety. I cannot sufficiently admire that spirit of honesty which prevails through the whole country of Siberia: perhaps the savages of that desolate region are the only untutored people of the globe that cultivate the moral virtues, even without knowing that their actions merit praise. I have been told surprising things of their goodness, benevolence, and generosity; and the uninterrupted commerce between China and Russia serves as a collateral confirmation.

"Let us," says the Chinese law-giver, "admire the rude virtues of the ignorant, but rather imitate the delicate morals of the polite." In the country where I reside, though hon-

esty and benevolence be not so congenial, yet art supplies the place of nature. Though here every vice is carried to excess, yet every virtue is practised also with unexampled superiority. A city like this is the soil for great virtues and great vices; the villain can soon improve here in the deepest mysteries of deceiving; and the practical philosopher can every day meet new incitements to mend his honest intentions. There are no pleasures, sensual or sentimental, which this city does not produce; yet, I know not how, I could not be content to reside here for life. There is something so seducing in that spot in which we first had existence, that nothing but it can please. Whatever vicissitudes we experience in life, however we toil, or wheresoever we wander, our fatigued wishes still recur to home for tranquillity: we long to die in that spot which gave us birth, and in that pleasing expectation opiate every calamity.

You now, therefore, perceive that I have some intentions of leaving this country; and yet my designed departure fills me with reluctance and regret. Though the friendships of travellers are generally more transient than vernal snows, still I feel an uneasiness at breaking the connections I have formed since my arrival; particularly, I shall have no small pain in leaving my usual companion, guide, and instructor.

I shall wait for the arrival of my son before I set out. He shall be my companion in every intended journey for the future. In his company I can support the fatigues of the way with redoubled ardor, pleased at once with conveying instruction and exacting obedience. Adieu.

LETTER CIV.

THE ARTS SOME MAKE USE OF TO APPEAR LEARNED.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin.

Our scholars of China have a most profound veneration for forms. A first-rate beauty never studied the decorums of dress with more assiduity; they may properly enough be said to be clothed with wisdom from head to foot; they have their philosophical caps and philosophical whiskers, their philosophical slippers and philosophical fans: there is even a philosophical standard for measuring the nails; and yet, with all this seeming wisdom, they are often found to be mere empty pretenders.

A philosophical beau is not so frequent in Europe; yet I am told that such characters are found here. I mean such as punctually support all the decorums of learning, without being really very profound, or naturally possessed of a fine understanding: who labor hard to obtain the titular honors attending literary merit, who flatter others, in order to be flattered in turn, and only study to be thought students.

A character of this kind generally receives company in his study, in all the pensive formality of slippers, night-gown, and easy-chair. The table is covered with a large book, which is always kept open, and never read; his solitary hours being dedicated to dozing, mending pens, feeling his pulse, peeping through the microscope, and sometimes reading amusing books, which he condemns in company. His library is preserved with the most religious neatness, and is generally a repository of scarce books, which bear a high price, because too dull or useless to become common by the ordinary methods of publication.

Such men are generally candidates for admittance into

literary clubs, academies, and institutions, where they regularly meet to give and receive a little instruction, and a great deal of praise. In conversation they never betray ignorance, because they never seem to receive information. Offer a new observation, they have heard it before; pinch them in an argument, and they reply with a sneer.

Yet, how trifling soever these little arts may appear, they answer one valuable purpose, of gaining the practisers the esteem they wish for. The bounds of a man's knowledge are easily concealed, if he has but prudence; but all can readily see and admire a gilt library, a set of long nails, a silver standish, or a well-combed whisker, who are incapable of distinguishing a dunce.

When Father Matthew,[1] the first European missioner, entered China, the court was informed that he possessed great skill in astronomy; he was therefore sent for, and examined. The established astronomers of state undertook this task, and made their report to the emperor that his skill was but very superficial, and no way comparable to their own. The missioner, however, appealed from their judgment to experience, and challenged them to calculate an eclipse of the moon that was to happen a few nights following. "What!" said some, "shall a barbarian without nails pretend to vie with men in astronomy who have made it the study of their lives; with men who know half the knowable characters of words, who wear scientifical caps and slippers, and who have gone through every literary degree with applause?" They accepted the challenge, confident of success. The eclipse began: the Chinese produced a most splendid apparatus, and were fifteen minutes wrong; the missioner, with a single instrument, was exact to a second. This was convincing; but the court

[1] Father Matthew Ricci, who may justly be considered as the first founder of the Catholic mission to China, was born at Macerata in 1552. By his intimate knowledge of the mathematical and experimental sciences he had the means of making friends and converts. He was much esteemed by the emperor, and was permitted to build a church at Pekin, where he died in 1610, leaving behind him some valuable memoirs respecting China which have been made use of by Père Frigault in his history of that empire.—See MORERI, and DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 30.

astronomers were not to be convinced: instead of acknowledging their error, they assured the emperor that their calculations were certainly exact, but that the stranger without nails had actually bewitched the moon. "Well, then," cries the good emperor, smiling at their ignorance, "you shall still continue to be servants of the moon, but I constitute this man her controller."

China is thus replete with men whose only pretensions to knowledge arise from external circumstances; and in Europe every country abounds with them in proportion to its ignorance. Spain and Flanders, who are behind the rest of Europe in learning at least three centuries, have twenty literary titles and marks of distinction unknown in France or England: they have their *Clarissimi* and *Præclarissimi*, their *Accuratissimi* and *Minutissimi;* a round cap entitles one student to argue, and a square cap permits another to teach; while a cap with a tassel almost sanctifies the head it happens to cover. But, where true knowledge is cultivated, these formalities begin to disappear; the ermined cowl, the solemn beard, and the sweeping train are laid aside; philosophers dress, and talk, and think like other men; and lamb-skin dressers, and cap-makers, and tail-carriers now deplore a literary age.

For my own part, my friend, I have seen enough of presuming ignorance never to venerate wisdom but where it actually appears. I have received literary titles and distinctions myself; and by the quantity of my own wisdom know how very little wisdom they can confer. Adieu.

LETTER CV.

THE INTENDED CORONATION DESCRIBED.

From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin.

THE time for the young king's coronation[1] approaches; the great and the little world look forward with impatience. A knight from the country, who has brought up his family to see and be seen on this occasion, has taken all the lower part of the house where I lodge. His wife is laying in a large quantity of silks, which the mercer tells her are to be fashionable next season; and miss, her daughter, has actually had her ears bored previously to the ceremony. In all this bustle of preparation I am considered as mere lumber, and have been shoved up two stories higher, to make room for others my landlady seems perfectly convinced are my betters; but whom, before me, she is contented with only calling very good company.

The little beau, who has now forced himself into my intimacy, was yesterday giving me a minute detail of the intended procession. All men are eloquent upon their favorite topic; and this seemed peculiarly adapted to the size and turn of his understanding. His whole mind was blazoned over with a variety of glittering images: coronets, escutcheons, lace, fringe, tassels, stones, bugles, and spun glass. "Here," cried he, "Garter is to walk; and there Rouge Dragon marches with the escutcheons on his back. Here Clarencieux moves forward, and there Blue Mantle disdains to be left behind. Here the Aldermen march two and two, and there the

[1] That of George III., on the 22d September, 1761. This paper originally appeared in *The Public Ledger*. Goldsmith wrote three more papers on this subject. See Essays XXV. and XXVI. of Collected Essays, in Vol. V., and essay among Unacknowledged Essays, in Vol. VI. of this edition.

undaunted Champion of England, no way terrified at the very numerous appearance of gentlemen and ladies, rides forward in complete armor, and, with an intrepid air, throws down his glove. Ah!" continued he, "should any be so hardy as to take up that fatal glove, and so accept the challenge, we should see fine sport: the Champion would show him no mercy; he would soon teach him all his passes, with a witness! However, I am afraid we shall have none willing to try it with him upon the approaching occasion, for two reasons; first, because his antagonist would stand a chance of being killed in the single combat; and secondly, because if he escapes the Champion's arm he would certainly be hanged for treason. No, no; I fancy none will be so hardy as to dispute it with a Champion like him, inured to arms; and we shall probably see him prancing unmolested away, holding his bridle thus in one hand, and brandishing his dram-cup in the other."

Some men have a manner of describing which only wraps the subject in more than former obscurity; thus was I unable, with all my companion's volubility, to form a distinct idea of the intended procession. I was certain that the inauguration of a king should be conducted with solemnity and religious awe; and I could not be persuaded that there was much solemnity in this description. "If this be true," cried I to myself, "the people of Europe surely have a strange manner of mixing solemn and fantastic images together — pictures at once replete with burlesque and the sublime. At a time when the king enters into the most solemn compact with his people, nothing surely should be admitted to diminish from the real majesty of the ceremony. A ludicrous image brought in at such a time throws an air of ridicule upon the whole. It some way resembles a picture I have seen, designed by Albert Durer, where, amid all the solemnity of that awful scene, a Deity judging, and a trembling world awaiting the decree, he has introduced a merry mortal trundling his scolding wife to hell in a wheelbarrow.

My companion, who mistook my silence during this interval of reflection for the rapture of astonishment, proceeded to describe those frivolous parts of the show that most struck

The Coronation of George III. in Westminster Abbey

his imagination, and to assure me that if I stayed in this country some months longer I should see fine things. "For my own part," continued he, "I know already of fifteen suits of clothes that would stand on one end with gold lace, all designed to be first shown there; and as for diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls, we shall see them as thick as brass nails in a sedan-chair. And then we are all to walk so majestically, thus: this foot always behind the foot before. The ladies are to fling nosegays, the court poets to scatter verses, the spectators are to be all in full dress, Mrs. Tibbs in a new sack, ruffles, and Frenched hair—look where you will, one thing finer than another! Mrs. Tibbs courtesies to the duchess; her grace returns the compliment with a bow. 'Largess!' cries the herald. 'Make room!' cries the gentleman usher. 'Knock him down!' cries the guard. Ah!" continued he, amazed at his own description, "what an astonishing scene of grandeur can art produce from the smallest circumstance, when it thus actually turns to wonder one man putting on another man's hat!"

I now found his mind was entirely set upon the fopperies of the pageant, and quite regardless of the real meaning of such costly preparations. "Pageants," says Bacon, "are pretty things, but we should rather study to make them elegant than expensive." Processions, cavalcades, and all that fund of gay frippery furnished out by tailors, barbers, and tire-women mechanically influence the mind into veneration; an emperor in his nightcap would not meet with half the respect of an emperor with a glittering crown. Politics resemble religion: attempting to divest either of ceremony is the most certain method of bringing either into contempt. The weak must have their inducements to admiration as well as the wise; and it is the business of a sensible government to impress all ranks with a sense of subordination, whether this be effected by a diamond buckle or a virtuous edict, a sumptuary law or a glass necklace.

This interval of reflection only gave my companion spirits to begin his description afresh; and, as a greater inducement to raise my curiosity, he informed me of the vast sums that

cas, who has got a most gloomy countenance. The shepherd asks his friend whence that look of distress? to which the other replies that Pollio is no more. "If that be the case, then," cries Damon, "let us retire to yonder bower at some distance off, where the cypress and the jasmine add fragrance to the breeze; and let us weep alternately for Pollio, the friend of shepherds and the patron of every muse." "Ah!" returns his fellow-shepherd, "what think you, rather, of that grotto by the fountain side? the murmuring stream will help to assist our complaints, and a nightingale on a neighboring tree will join her voice to the concert." When the place is thus settled, they begin: the brook stands still to hear their lamentations, the cows forget to graze, and the very tigers start from the forest with sympathetic concern. By the tombs of our ancestors, my dear Fum, I am quite unaffected in all this distress: the whole is liquid laudanum to my spirits; and a tiger of common sensibility has twenty times more tenderness than I.[1]

But though I could never weep with the complaining shepherd, yet I am sometimes induced to pity the poet, whose trade is thus to make demigods and heroes for a dinner. There is not in nature a more dismal figure than a man who sits down to premeditated flattery: every stanza he writes tacitly reproaches the meanness of his occupation, till at last his stupidity becomes more stupid, and his dulness more diminutive.

I am amazed, therefore, that none have yet found out the

[1] "In his amorous effusions he [Prior] is less happy; for they are not dictated by nature or by passion, and have neither gallantry nor tenderness. They have the coldness of Cowley, without his wit, the dull exercises of a skilful versifier, resolved at all adventures to write something about Chloe, and trying to be amorous by dint of study. His fictions, therefore, are mythological. Venus, after the example of the Greek epigram, asks when she was seen *naked and bathing*. Then *Cupid* is *mistaken;* then *Cupid* is *disarmed;* then he loses his darts to *Ganymede;* then *Jupiter* sends him a summons by *Mercury*. Then *Chloe* goes a-hunting, with an *ivory quiver graceful at her side;* Diana mistakes her for one of her nymphs, and Cupid laughs at the blunder. All this is surely despicable; and even when he tries to act the lover, without the help of gods or goddesses, his thoughts are unaffecting or remote. He talks not 'like a man of this world.'"—JOHNSON'S *Life of Prior.*

secret of flattering the worthless, and yet of preserving a safe conscience. I have often wished for some method by which a man might do himself and his deceased patron justice, without being under the hateful reproach of self-conviction. After long lucubration I have hit upon such an expedient, and sent you the specimen of a poem upon the decease of a great man, in which the flattery is perfectly fine, and yet the poet perfectly innocent.

ON THE DEATH OF THE RIGHT HONORABLE ———.[1]

Ye muses, pour the pitying tear
For Pollio snatch'd away:
Oh, had he liv'd another year!
——*He had not died to-day.*

Oh, were ye born to bless mankind
In virtuous times of yore,
Heroes themselves had fallen behind!
——*Whene'er he went before.*

How sad the groves and plains appear,
And sympathetic sheep:
E'en pitying hills would drop a tear:
——*If hills could learn to weep.*

His bounty in exalted strain
Each bard might well display,
Since none implored relief in vain!
——*That went relieved away.*

And hark! I hear the tuneful throng
His obsequies forbid;
He still shall live, shall live as long
——*As ever dead man did.*

[1] Written in the same style of humor as his "Elegy on Mrs. Mary Blaize," Vol. I. p. 110.

LETTER CVII.

THE ENGLISH TOO FOND OF BELIEVING EVERY REPORT WITHOUT EXAMINATION.—A STORY OF AN INCENDIARY TO THIS PURPOSE.

To the Same.

It is the most usual method in every report first to examine its probability, and then act as the conjuncture may require. The English, however, exert a different spirit in such circumstances; they first act, and when too late begin to examine. From a knowledge of this disposition, there are several here who make it their business to frame new reports at every convenient interval, all tending to denounce ruin, both on their contemporaries and their posterity. This denunciation is eagerly caught up by the public: away they fling to propagate the distress; sell out at one place, buy in at another, grumble at their governors, shout in mobs, and when they have thus for some time behaved like fools, sit down coolly to argue and talk wisdom, to puzzle each other with syllogism, and prepare for the next report that prevails, which is always attended with the same success.

Thus are they ever rising above one report, only to sink into another. They resemble a dog in a well, pawing to get free. When he has raised his upper parts above water, and every spectator imagines him disengaged, his lower parts drag him down again and sink him to the nose; he makes new efforts to emerge, and every effort increasing his weakness, only tends to sink him the deeper.

There are some here who, I am told, make a tolerable subsistence by the credulity of their countrymen. As they find the public fond of blood, wounds, and death, they contrive political ruins suited to every month in the year. This month the people are to be eaten up by the French in flat-bottomed boats; the next by the soldiers, designed to beat the French

back: now the people are going to jump down the gulf of luxury; and now nothing but a herring subscription can fish them up again.[1] Time passes on; the report proves false; new circumstances produce new changes; but the people never change—they are persevering in folly.

In other countries those boding politicians would be left to fret over their own schemes alone, and grow splenetic without hopes of infecting others; but England seems to be the very region where spleen delights to dwell; a man not only can give an unbounded scope to the disorder in himself, but may, if he pleases, propagate it over the whole kingdom, with a certainty of success. He has only to cry out that the government, the government is all wrong; that their schemes are leading to ruin; that Britons are no more: every good member of the commonwealth thinks it his duty, in such a case, to deplore the universal decadence with sympathetic sorrow, and, by fancying the constitution in a decay, absolutely to impair its vigor.

This people would laugh at my simplicity should I advise them to be less sanguine in harboring gloomy predictions, and examine coolly before they attempted to complain. I have just heard a story, which, though transacted in a private family, serves very well to describe the behavior of the whole nation in cases of threatened calamity. As there are public so there are private incendiaries here. One of the last, either for the amusement of his friends, or to divert a fit of the spleen, lately sent a threatening letter to a worthy family in my neighborhood, to this effect:

"SIR,—Knowing you to be very rich, and finding myself to be very poor, I think proper to inform you that I have learned the secret of poisoning man, woman, and child without danger of detection. Don't be uneasy, sir; you may take your choice of being poisoned in a fortnight, or poisoned in a month, or poisoned in six weeks; you shall have full time to settle all your affairs. Though I am poor, I love to do things

[1] See Vol. IV. p. 224, and Vol. VI. p. 189.

like a gentleman. But, sir, you must die; I have determined it within my own breast that you must die. Blood, sir, blood is my trade; so I could wish you would this day six weeks take leave of your friends, wife, and family, for I cannot possibly allow you longer time. To convince you more certainly of the power of my art, by which you may know I speak truth, take this letter; when you have read it, tear off the seal, fold it up, and give it to your favorite Dutch mastiff that sits by the fire; he will swallow it, sir, like a buttered toast; in three hours four minutes after he has taken it he will attempt to bite off his own tongue, and half an hour after burst asunder in twenty pieces. Blood! blood! blood! So no more at present from, sir, your most obedient, most devoted, humble servant to command, till death."

You may easily imagine the consternation into which this letter threw the whole good-natured family. The poor man to whom it was addressed was the more surprised, as not knowing how he could merit such inveterate malice. All the friends of the family were convened; it was universally agreed that it was a most terrible affair, and that the government should be solicited to offer a reward and a pardon: a fellow of this kind would go on poisoning family after family, and it was impossible to say where the destruction would end. In pursuance of these determinations the government was applied to; strict search was made after the incendiary, but all in vain. At last, therefore, they recollected that the experiment was not yet tried upon the dog; the Dutch mastiff was brought up and placed in the midst of the friends and relations, the seal was torn off, the packet folded up with care, and soon they found, to the great surprise of all—that the dog would not eat the letter. Adieu.

LETTER CVIII.

THE UTILITY AND ENTERTAINMENT THAT MIGHT RESULT FROM A JOURNEY INTO THE EAST.[1]

To the Same.

I HAVE frequently been amazed at the ignorance of almost all the European travellers who have penetrated any considerable way eastward into Asia. They have been influenced either by motives of commerce or piety; and their accounts are such as might reasonably be expected from men of very narrow or very prejudiced education, the dictates of superstition, or the result of ignorance. Is it not surprising that, in such a variety of adventurers, not one single philosopher should be found? for as to the travels of Gemelli, the learned are long agreed that the whole is but an imposture.[2]

There is scarce any country, how rude or uncultivated soever, where the inhabitants are not possessed of some peculiar secrets, either in nature or art, which might be transplanted with success. In Siberian Tartary, for instance, the natives extract a strong spirit from milk, which is a secret probably unknown to the chemists of Europe. In the most savage parts of India they are possessed of the secret of dyeing vegetable substances scarlet, and of refining lead into a metal which, for hardness and color, is little inferior to silver; not one of which secrets but would in Europe make a man's

[1] Reprinted by Goldsmith in 1765, as Essay XVIII.

[2] "I can affirm it to be no less certain that Gemelli was in Mexico and at Acapulco than that Pallas has been in the Crimea and Mr. Salt in Abyssinia. Gemelli's descriptions have that local tint which is the principal charm of the narratives of travels written by the most unlettered men, and which can be given only by those who have been ocular witnesses of what they describe."—BARON DE HUMBOLDT, *Armenian Researches.*

fortune. The power of the Asiatics in producing winds or bringing down rain the Europeans are apt to treat as fabulous, because they have no instances of the like nature among themselves; but they would have treated the secrets of gunpowder and the mariner's compass in the same manner, had they been told the Chinese used such arts before the invention was common with themselves at home.

Of all the English philosophers, I most reverence Bacon, that great and hardy genius; he it is who allows of secrets yet unknown; who, undaunted by the seeming difficulties that oppose, prompts human curiosity to examine every part of nature, and even exhorts man to try whether he cannot subject the tempest, the thunder, and even earthquakes, to human control. Oh, did a man of his daring spirit, of his genius, penetration, and learning, travel to those countries which have been visited only by the superstitious and mercenary, what might not mankind expect! How would he enlighten the regions to which he travelled! and what a variety of knowledge and useful improvement would he not bring back in exchange!

There is probably no country so barbarous that would not disclose all it knew, if it received from the traveller equivalent information; and I am apt to think that a person who was ready to give more knowledge than he received would be welcome wherever he came. All his care in travelling should only be to suit his intellectual banquet to the people with whom he conversed: he should not attempt to teach the unlettered Tartar astronomy, nor yet instruct the polite Chinese in the ruder arts of subsistence; he should endeavor to improve the barbarian in the secrets of living comfortably, and the inhabitant of a more refined country in the speculative pleasures of science. How much more nobly would a philosopher thus employed spend his time than by sitting at home, earnestly intent upon adding one star more to his catalogue, or one monster more to his collection, or still, if possible, more trifilingly sedulous in the incatenation of fleas, or the sculpture of a cherry-stone!

I never consider this subject without being surprised that

none of those societies, so laudably established in England for the promotion of arts and learning, have ever thought of sending one of their members into the most eastern parts of Asia, to make what discoveries he was able. To be convinced of the utility of such an undertaking, let them but read the relations of their own travellers. It will be there found that they are as often deceived themselves as they attempt to deceive others. The merchant tells us, perhaps, the price of different commodities, the methods of baling them up, and the properest manner for a European to preserve his health in the country. The missioner, on the other hand, informs us with what pleasure the country to which he was sent embraced Christianity, and the numbers he converted; what methods he took to keep Lent in a region where there was no fish, or the shifts he made to celebrate the rites of his religion in places where there was neither bread nor wine. Such accounts, with the usual appendage of marriage and funerals, inscriptions, rivers, and mountains, make up the whole of a European traveller's diary; but as to all the secrets of which the inhabitants are possessed, those are universally attributed to magic; and when the traveller can give no other account of the wonders he sees performed, very contentedly ascribes them to the power of the devil.

It was a usual observation of Boyle, the English chemist, that if every artist would but discover what new observations occurred to him in the exercise of his trade, philosophy would thence gain innumerable improvements. It may be observed with still greater justice that if the useful knowledge of every country, howsoever barbarous, was gleaned by a judicious observer, the advantages would be inestimable. Are there not even in Europe many useful inventions known or practised but in one place? The instrument, as an example, for cutting down corn in Germany is much more handy and expeditious, in my opinion, than the sickle used in England. The cheap and expeditious manner of making vinegar without previous fermentation is known only in a part of France. If such discoveries, therefore, remain still to be known at home, what funds of knowledge might not be collected in

countries yet unexplored, or only passed through by ignorant travellers in hasty caravans![1]

The caution with which foreigners are received in Asia may be alleged as an objection to such a design. But how readily have several European merchants found admission into regions the most suspecting, under the character of *sanjapins*, or Northern pilgrims; to such not even China itself denies access.

To send out a traveller properly qualified for these purposes might be an object of national concern; it would, in some measure, repair the breaches made by ambition, and might show that there were still some who boasted a greater name than that of patriots, who professed themselves lovers of men. The only difficulty would remain in choosing a proper person for so arduous an enterprise. He should be a man of a philosophical turn, one apt to deduce consequences of general utility from particular occurrences; neither swollen with pride, nor hardened by prejudice; neither wedded to one particular system, nor instructed only in one particular science; neither wholly a botanist, nor quite an antiquarian; his mind should be tinctured with miscellaneous knowledge, and his manners humanized by an intercourse with men. He should be in some measure an enthusiast in the design; fond of travelling, from a rapid imagination and an innate love of change; furnished with a body capable of sustaining every fatigue, and a heart not easily terrified at danger. Adieu.

[1] "I hope that a mind comprehensive like yours will find leisure, amidst the cares of your important station, to inquire into many subjects of which the European world either thinks not at all, or thinks with deficient intelligence and uncertain conjecture. I shall hope that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men from whom very little has been hitherto derived. You, sir, have no need of being told by me how much may be added by your attention to experimental knowledge and natural history. There are arts of manufacture practised in the countries in which you preside which are yet very imperfectly known here, either by artificers or philosophers. Of the natural productions, animate and inanimate, we yet have so little intelligence, that our books are filled, I fear, with conjectures about things which an Indian peasant knows by his senses."—JOHNSON *to Warren Hastings*, March 30, 1774.

LETTER CIX.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER ATTEMPTS TO FIND OUT FAMOUS MEN.

From the Same.

One of the principal tasks I had proposed to myself on my arrival here was to become acquainted with the names and characters of those now living who, as scholars or wits, had acquired the greatest share of reputation. In order to succeed in this design, I fancied the surest method would be to begin my inquiry among the ignorant, judging that his fame would be greatest which was loud enough to be heard by the vulgar. Thus predisposed, I began the search, but only went in quest of disappointment and perplexity. I found every district had a peculiar famous man of its own. Here the story-telling shoemaker had engrossed the admiration on one side of the street, while the bellman, who excels at a catch, was in quiet possession of the other. At one end of a lane the sexton was regarded as the greatest man alive; but I had not travelled half its length till I found an enthusiast teacher had divided his reputation. My landlady, perceiving my design, was kind enough to offer me her advice in this affair. It was true, she observed, she was no judge, but she knew what pleased herself, and if I would rest upon her judgment, I should set down Tom Collins as the most ingenious man in the world; for Tom was able to take off all mankind, and imitate, besides, a sow and pigs to perfection.

I now perceived that taking my standard of reputation among the vulgar would swell my catalogue of great names above the size of a court calendar; I therefore discontinued this method of pursuit, and resolved to prosecute my inquiry in that usual residence of fame, a bookseller's shop.[1] In con-

[1] Jacob Tonson's shop in the Strand was long the rendezvous of the most eminent authors in England; a little later, Garrick made Becket's, in Adam Street,

kind in the distribution of fame! the ignorant, among whom I sought at first, were willing to grant, but incapable of distinguishing the virtues of those who deserved it; among those I now converse with they know the proper objects of admiration, but mix envy with applause."

Disappointed so often, I was now resolved to examine those characters in person of whom the world talked so freely. By conversing with men of real merit,[1] I began to find out those characters which really deserved, though they strove to avoid, applause. I found the vulgar admiration entirely misplaced, and malevolence without its sting. The truly great, possessed of numerous small faults and shining virtues, preserve a sublime in morals as in writing. They who have attained an excellence in either commit numberless transgressions, observable to the meanest understanding. The ignorant critic and dull remarker can readily spy blemishes in eloquence or morals whose sentiments are not sufficiently elevated to observe a beauty. But such are judges neither of books nor of life; they can diminish no solid reputation by their censure, nor bestow a lasting character by their applause. In short, I found by my search that such only can confer real fame upon others who have merit themselves to deserve it. Adieu.

LETTER CX.

SOME PROJECTS FOR INTRODUCING ASIATIC EMPLOYMENTS INTO THE COURTS OF ENGLAND.

To the Same.

THERE are numberless employments in the courts of the Eastern monarchs utterly unpractised and unknown in Europe. They have no such officers, for instance, as the emperor's ear-tickler or tooth-picker; they have never introduced at the courts the mandarin appointed to bear the royal tobac-

[1] He had about this time become acquainted with Johnson, whose after influence on his life was indeed great.

co-box, or the grave director of the imperial exercitations in the seraglio. Yet I am surprised that the English have imitated us in none of these particulars, as they are generally pleased with everything that comes from China, and excessively fond of creating new and useless employments. They have filled their houses with our furniture, their public gardens with our fireworks, and their very ponds with our fish. Our courtiers, my friend, are the fish and the furniture they should have imported; our courtiers would fill up the necessary ceremonies of a court better than those of Europe; would be contented with receiving large salaries for doing little—whereas, some of this country are at present discontented, though they receive large salaries for doing nothing.

I lately, therefore, had thoughts of publishing a proposal here for the admission of some new Eastern offices and titles into their court-register. As I consider myself in the light of a cosmopolite, I find as much satisfaction in scheming for the countries in which I happen to reside as for that in which I was born.

The finest apartments in the palace of Pegu are frequently infested with rats. These the religion of the country strictly forbids the people to kill. In such circumstances, therefore, they are obliged to have recourse to some great man of the court who is willing to free the royal apartments even at the hazard of his salvation. After a weak monarch's reign the quantity of court vermin in every corner of the palace is surprising; but a prudent king and a vigilant officer soon drive them from their sanctuaries behind the mats and tapestry, and effectually free the court. Such an officer in England would, in my opinion, be serviceable at this juncture; for if, as I am told, the palace be old, much vermin must undoubtedly have taken refuge behind the wainscot and hangings. A minister should therefore be invested with the title and dignities of court vermin-killer; he should have full power either to banish, take, poison, or destroy them, with enchantments, traps, ferrets, or ratsbane. He might be permitted to brandish his besom without remorse, and brush down every part of the furniture, without sparing a single cobweb, how-

ble both know nothing more than the harness of a one-horse chaise.

No, no, my friend; instead of conferring any order upon the husbands, I would knight their wives. However, the state should not be troubled with a new institution upon this occasion. Some ancient exploded order might be revived which would furnish both a motto and a name; the ladies might be permitted to choose for themselves. There are, for instance, the obsolete orders of the Dragon in Germany, of the Rue in Scotland, and the Porcupine in France, all well-sounding names, and very applicable to my intended female institution. Adieu.

LETTER CXI.

ON THE DIFFERENT SECTS IN ENGLAND, PARTICULARLY METHODISTS.

To the Same.

Religious sects in England are far more numerous than in China. Every man who has interest enough to hire a conventicle here may set up for himself, and sell off a new religion. The sellers of the newest pattern at present give extreme good bargains, and let their disciples have a great deal of confidence for very little money.

Their shops are much frequented, and their customers every day increasing; for people are naturally fond of going to paradise at as small expense as possible.

Yet you must not conceive this modern sect as differing in opinion from those of the established religion. Difference of opinion, indeed, formerly divided their sectaries, and sometimes drew their armies to the field: white gowns and black mantles, flapped hats and cross pocket-holes were once the obvious causes of quarrel; men then had some reason for fighting, they knew what they fought about; but at present they are arrived at such refinement in religion-making that they have actually formed a new sect without a new opinion;

they quarrel for opinions they both equally defend; they hate each other, and that is all the difference between them.

But though their principles are the same, their practice is somewhat different. Those of the established religion laugh when they are pleased, and their groans are seldom extorted but by pain or danger. The new sect, on the contrary, weep for their amusement, and use little music except a chorus of sighs and groans, or tunes that are made to imitate groaning. Laughter is their aversion; lovers court each other from the Lamentations; the bridegroom approaches the nuptial couch in sorrowful solemnity, and the bride looks more dismal than an undertaker's shop. Dancing round the room is with them running in a direct line to the devil; and as for gaming, though but in jest, they would sooner play with a rattlesnake's tail than finger a dice-box.

By this time you perceive that I am describing a sect of enthusiasts, and you have already compared them with the Fakirs, Bramins, and Talapoins of the East. Among these, you know, are generations that have been never known to smile, and voluntary affliction makes up all the merit they can boast of. Enthusiasms in every country produce the same effects; stick the Fakir with pins, or confine the Bramin to a vermin hospital; spread the Talapoin on the ground, or load the sectary's brow with contrition: those worshippers who discard the light of reason are ever gloomy; their fears increase in proportion to their ignorance, as men are continually under apprehensions who walk in darkness.

Yet there is still a stronger reason for the enthusiast's being an enemy to laughter; namely, his being himself so proper an object of ridicule. It is remarkable that the propagators of false doctrines have ever been averse to mirth, and always begin by recommending gravity when they intended to disseminate imposture. Fohi, the idol of China, is represented as having never laughed; Zoroaster, the leader of the Bramins, is said to have laughed but twice—upon his coming into the world, and upon his leaving it; and Mohammed himself, though a lover of pleasure, was a professed opposer of gayety. Upon a certain occasion, telling his followers that

they would all appear naked at the resurrection, his favorite wife represented such an assembly as immodest and unbecoming. "Foolish woman!" cried the grave prophet, "though the whole assembly be naked, on that day they shall have forgotten to laugh." Men like him opposed ridicule, because they knew it to be a most formidable antagonist, and preached up gravity, to conceal their own want of importance.

Ridicule has ever been the most powerful enemy of enthusiasm, and properly the only antagonist that can be opposed to it with success. Persecution only serves to propagate new religions; they acquire fresh vigor beneath the executioner and the axe; and, like some vivacious insects, multiply by dissection. It is also impossible to combat enthusiasm with reason, for though it makes a show of resistance, it soon eludes the pressure; refers you to distinctions not to be understood, and feelings which it cannot explain. A man who would endeavor to fix an enthusiast by argument might as well attempt to spread quicksilver with his fingers. The only way to conquer a visionary is to despise him; the stake, the fagot, and the disputing doctor in some measure ennoble the opinions they are brought to oppose: they are harmless against innovating pride; contempt alone is truly dreadful. Hunters generally know the most vulnerable part of the beasts they pursue, by the care which every animal takes to defend the side which is weakest; on what side the enthusiast is most vulnerable may be known by the care which he takes in the beginning to work his disciples into gravity, and guard them against the power of ridicule.

When Philip the Second was King of Spain there was a contest in Salamanca between two orders of friars for superiority. The legend of one side contained more extraordinary miracles, but the legend of the other was reckoned most authentic. They reviled each other, as is usual in disputes of divinity; the people were divided into factions, and a civil war appeared unavoidable. In order to prevent such an imminent calamity, the combatants were prevailed upon to submit their legends to the fiery trial, and that which came forth untouched by the fire was to have the victory, and to be hon-

ored with a double share of reverence. Whenever the people flock to see a miracle, it is a hundred to one but that they see a miracle; incredible, therefore, were the numbers that were gathered round upon this occasion. The friars on each side approached, and confidently threw their respective legends into the flames, when lo! to the utter disappointment of all the assembly, instead of a miracle, both legends were consumed. Nothing but thus turning both parties into contempt could have prevented the effusion of blood. The people now laughed at their former folly, and wondered why they fell out. Adieu.

LETTER CXII.

AN ELECTION DESCRIBED.

To the Same.

THE English are at present employed in celebrating a feast which becomes general every seventh year; the Parliament of the nation being then dissolved,[1] and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our feast of the lanterns in magnificence and splendor; it is also surpassed by others of the East in unanimity and pure devotion; but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating, indeed, amazes me; had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkeys which upon this occasion die for the good of their country.

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business, or amusement. When a church is to be built or a hospital to be endowed, the directors assemble, and instead of consulting upon it, they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with success. When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appoint-

[1] On the 20th of March, 1761, consequent on the death of George II.

ed to dole out public charity assemble and eat upon it; nor has it ever been known that they filled the bellies of the poor till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates the people seem to exceed all bounds; the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats; his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense, but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing; but what amazes me is, that all this good living no way contributes to improve their good-humor. On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites; every morsel they swallow and every glass they pour down serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner has become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastry-cook, who was general of the opposite party.

But you must not suppose they are without a pretext for thus beating each other. On the contrary, no man here is so uncivilized as to beat his neighbor without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture; another always drinks brandy imported from abroad. Brandy is a wholesome liquor, gin a liquor wholly their own. This, then, furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel—whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin or get drunk with brandy? The mob meet upon the debate, fight themselves sober, and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war; since, while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home.

I lately made an excursion to a neighboring village, in order to be a spectator of the ceremonies practised upon this

occasion. I left town in company with three fiddlers, nine dozen of hams, and a corporation poet, which were designed as re-enforcements to the gin-drinking party. We entered the town with a very good face; the fiddlers, no way intimidated by the enemy, kept handling their arms up the principal street. By this prudent manœuvre they took peaceable possession of their head-quarters, amid the shouts of multitudes, who seemed perfectly rejoiced at hearing their music, but above all at seeing their bacon.

I must own I could not avoid being pleased to see all ranks of people on this occasion levelled into an equality, and the poor, in some measure, enjoying the primitive privileges of nature. If there was any distinction shown, the lowest of the people seemed to receive it from the rich. I could perceive a cobbler with a levee at his door, and a haberdasher giving audience from behind his counter. But my reflections were soon interrupted by a mob, who demanded whether I was for the distillery or the brewery? As these were terms with which I was totally unacquainted, I chose at first to be silent; however, I know not what might have been the consequence of my reserve, had not the attention of the mob been called off to a skirmish between a brandy-drinker's cow and a gin-drinker's mastiff, which turned out, greatly to the satisfaction of the mob, in favor of the mastiff.

The spectacle, which afforded high entertainment, was at last ended by the appearance of one of the candidates, who came to harangue the mob; he made a very pathetic speech upon the late excessive importation of foreign drams, and the downfall of the distillery. I could see some of the audience shed tears. He was accompanied in his procession by Mrs. Deputy and Mrs. Mayoress. Mrs. Deputy was not in the least in liquor; and as for Mrs. Mayoress, one of the spectators assured me, in my ear, that—she was a very fine woman before she had the small-pox.

Mixing with the crowd, I was now conducted to the hall where the magistrates are chosen; but what tongue can describe this scene of confusion! the whole crowd seemed equally inspired with anger, jealousy, politics, patriotism, and

punch. I remarked one figure that was carried up by two men upon this occasion. I at first began to pity his infirmities as natural, but soon found the fellow so drunk that he could not stand; another made his appearance to give his vote, but though he could stand, he actually lost the use of his tongue and remained silent; a third, who, though excessively drunk, could both stand and speak, being asked the candidate's name for whom he voted, could be prevailed upon to make no other answer but "Tobacco and brandy."

In short, an election hall seems to be a theatre where every passion is seen without disguise, a school where fools may readily become worse, and where philosophers may gather wisdom. Adieu.

LETTER CXIII.

A LITERARY CONTEST OF GREAT IMPORTANCE; IN WHICH BOTH SIDES FIGHT BY EPIGRAM.

From the Same.

THE disputes among the learned here are now carried on in a much more compendious manner than formerly. There was a time when folio was brought to oppose folio, and a champion was often listed for life under the banners of a single sorites. At present the controversy is decided in a summary way; an epigram or an acrostic finishes the debate, and the combatant, like the incursive Tartar, advances and retires with a single blow.

An important literary debate at the present engrosses the attention of the town. It is carried on with sharpness, and a proper share of this epigrammatical fury. An author,[1] it seems, has taken an aversion to the faces of several players, and has written verses to prove his dislike; the players fall upon the author, and assure the town he must be dull, and

[1] Charles Churchill. Churchill's "Rosciad," published in March, 1761, without the author's name, is said (and truly) to have occasioned a greater sensation in the public mind than had ever before been excited by any poetical performance.

their faces must be good, because he wants a dinner; a critic comes to the poet's assistance,[1] asserting that the verses were perfectly original, and so smart that he could never have written them without the assistance of friends; the friends, upon this, arraign the critic, and plainly prove the verses to be all the author's own. So at it they are, all four together, by the ears: the friends at the critic, the critic at the players, the players at the author, and the author at the players again. It is impossible to determine how this many-sided contest will end, or which party to adhere to. The town, without siding with any, views the combat in suspense, like the fabled hero of antiquity, who beheld the earth-born brothers give and receive mutual wounds, and fall by indiscriminate destruction.

This is, in some measure, the state of the present dispute; but the combatants here differ in one respect from the champions of the fable. Every new wound only gives vigor for another blow; though they appear to strike, they are in fact mutually swelling themselves into consideration, and thus advertising each other away into fame. "To-day," says one, "my name shall be in the *Gazette*, the next day my rival's; people will naturally inquire about us; thus we shall at least make a noise in the streets, though we have got nothing to sell." I have read of a dispute of a similar nature which was managed here about twenty years ago. Hildebrand Jacob,[2] as I think he was called, and Charles Johnson,[3] were poets, both at that time possessed of great reputation; for Johnson had written eleven plays, acted with great success; and Jacob,

[1] In *The Critical Review*. Out of this criticism grew the famous "Apology addressed to the Critical Reviewers by C. Churchill."

[2] Author of "The Fatal Constancy," a tragedy, of "The Nest of Plays," consisting of three comedies, etc. He was descended from Sir John Jacob, of Bromley, one of the farmers of the Customs, and in 1740 succeeded to the title of baronet. He died November, 1790, in his seventy-sixth year, and was buried in St. Anne's, Soho.

[3] Author of "The Victim" and "Cobbler of Preston." Died 1748. Pope has immortalized him as "fat Johnson," and in his "Fragment of a Satire" has thus spoken of him:

> "Jo—n, who now to sense, now nonsense, leaning,
> Means not, but blunders round about a meaning."

though he had written but five, had five times thanked the town for their unmerited applause. They soon became mutually enamored of each other's talents: they wrote, they felt, they challenged the town for each other. Johnson assured the public that no poet alive had the easy simplicity of Jacob, and Jacob exhibited Johnson as a masterpiece in the pathetic. Their mutual praise was not without effect: the town saw their plays, were in raptures—read, and, without censuring them, forgot them. So formidable a union, however, was soon opposed by Tibbald.[1] Tibbald asserted that the tragedies of the one had faults, and the comedies of the other substituted wit for vivacity: the combined champions flew at him like tigers, arraigned the censurer's judgment, and impeached his sincerity. It was a long time a dispute among the learned which was in fact the greatest man, Jacob, Johnson, or Tibbald; they had all written for the stage with great success, their names were seen in almost every paper, and their works in every coffee-house. However, in the hottest of the dispute a fourth combatant made his appearance, and swept away the three combatants, tragedy, comedy, and all, into undistinguished ruin.

From this time they seemed consigned into the hands of criticism; scarce a day passed in which they were not arraigned as detested writers. The critics, those enemies of Dryden and Pope, were their enemies. So Jacob and Johnson, instead of mending by criticism, called it envy; and, because Dryden and Pope were censured, they compared themselves to Dryden and Pope.

But to return. The weapon chiefly used in the present controversy is epigram; and certainly never was a keener made use of. They have discovered surprising sharpness on both sides. The first that came out upon this occasion was a kind of new composition in this way, and might more properly be called an epigrammatic thesis than an epigram. It consists, first, of an argument in prose; next follows a motto from

[1] Lewis Theobald, the editor of Shakspeare, and the hero of the first "Dunciad." Died 1744.

Roscommon; then comes the epigram; and lastly, notes serving to explain the epigram. But you shall have it, with all its decorations:

AN EPIGRAM

Addressed to the Gentlemen reflected on in "The Rosciad," a Poem, by the Author.

Worried with debts and past all hopes of bail,
His pen he prostitutes, t' avoid a jail.—ROSCOM.

"Let not the *hungry* Bavius' angry stroke
Awake resentment, or your rage provoke;
But, pitying his distress, let virtue[1] shine,
And, giving each your bounty,[2] *let him dine;*
For, thus retain'd, as learned counsel can,
Each case, however bad, he'll new japan;
And, by a quick transition, plainly show
'Twas no defect of yours, but *pocket low*,
That caused his *putrid kennel* to o'erflow."

The last lines are certainly executed in a very masterly manner. It is of that species of argumentation called the perplexing. It effectually flings the antagonist into a mist; there is no answering it: the laugh is raised against him, while he is endeavoring to find out the jest. At once he shows that the author has a kennel, and that this kennel is putrid, and that this putrid kennel overflows. But why does it overflow? It overflows because the author happens to have low pockets!

There was also another new attempt in this way—a prosaic epigram which came out upon this occasion. This is so full of matter that a critic might split it into fifteen epigrams, each properly fitted with its sting. You shall see it:

To G. C. *and* R. L.[3]

"'Twas you, or I, or he, or all together;
'Twas one, both, three of them, they know not whether;
This I believe, between us great or small,
You, I, he, wrote it not—'twas Churchill's all."

There, there's a perplex! I could have wished, to make it

[1] Charity.—GOLDSMITH.
[2] Settled at one shilling, the price of the poem.—GOLDSMITH.
[3] George Colman and Robert Lloyd.

all the little traffic of blushing, ogling, dimpling, and smiling has been forbidden by an act, in that case wisely made and provided. A lady's whole cargo of smiles, sighs, and whispers is declared utterly contraband till she arrives in the warm latitudes of twenty-two, where commodities of this nature are too often found to decay. She is then permitted to dimple and smile, when the dimples and smiles begin to forsake her; and, when perhaps grown ugly, is charitably intrusted with an unlimited use of her charms. Her lovers, however, by this time have forsaken her; the captain has changed for another mistress; the priest himself leaves her in solitude to bewail her virginity; and she dies even without benefit of clergy.

Thus you find the Europeans discouraging love with as much earnestness as the rudest savage of Sofala. The genius is surely now no more. In every region I find enemies in arms to oppress him. Avarice in Europe, jealousy in Persia, ceremony in China, poverty among the Tartars, and lust in Circassia, are all prepared to oppose his power. The genius is certainly banished from earth, though once adored under such a variety of forms. He is nowhere to be found; and all that the ladies of each country can produce are but a few trifling relics, as instances of his former residence and favor.

"The Genius of Love," says the Eastern apologue, "had long resided in the happy plains of Abra, where every breeze was health, and every sound produced tranquillity. His temple at first was crowded, but every age lessened the number of his votaries, or cooled their devotion. Perceiving, therefore, his altars at length quite deserted, he was resolved to remove to some more propitious region, and he apprised the fair sex of every country where he could hope for a proper reception to assert their right to his presence among them. In return to this proclamation embassies were sent from the ladies of every part of the world to invite him, and to display the superiority of their claims.

"At first the beauties of China appeared. No country could compare with them for modesty, either of look, dress, or behavior; their eyes were never lifted from the ground;

their robes of the most beautiful silk hid their hands, bosom, and neck, while their faces only were left uncovered. They indulged no airs that might express loose desire, and they seemed to study only the graces of inanimate beauty. Their black teeth and plucked eyebrows were, however, alleged by the genius against them, but he set them entirely aside when he came to examine their little feet.[1]

"The beauties of Circassia next made their appearance. They advanced hand-in-hand, singing the most immodest airs, and leading up a dance in the most luxurious attitudes. Their dress was but half a covering; the neck, the left breast, and all the limbs were exposed to view, which, after some time, seemed rather to satiate than inflame desire. The lily and the rose contended in forming their complexions; and a soft sleepiness of eye added irresistible poignance to their charms; but their beauties were obtruded, not offered, to their admirers; they seemed to give rather than receive courtship; and the Genius of Love dismissed them as unworthy his regard, since they exchanged the duties of love, and made themselves not the pursued but the pursuing sex.

"The kingdom of Cashmire next produced its charming deputies. This happy region seemed peculiarly sequestered by nature for his abode. Shady mountains fenced it on one side from the scorching sun, and sea-borne breezes on the other gave peculiar luxuriance to the air. Their complexions were of a bright yellow, that appeared almost transparent, while the crimson tulip seemed to blossom on their cheeks. Their features and limbs were delicate beyond the statuary's power to express; and their teeth whiter than their own ivory. He was almost persuaded to reside among them,

[1] "The dress of the females of China is extremely modest and becoming, and, in the higher classes, as splendid as the most exquisite silks and embroidery can make it. What we often choose to call dress they would regard as absolute nudity. They would frequently be very pretty were it not for the shocking custom of daubing their faces with white and red paint, to which may be added the deformity of cramped feet. The eyebrows of the young women are fashioned until they represent a fine curved line, which is compared to the new-moon when only a day or two old, or to the young leaflet of the willow."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 358.

shells round his neck, and whose legs were covered with ivory.

In this manner examine a savage in the history of his country and predecessors; you ever find his warriors able to conquer armies, and his sages acquainted with more than possible knowledge. Human nature is to him an unknown country; he thinks it capable of great things, because he is ignorant of its boundaries; whatever can be conceived to be done he allows to be possible, and whatever is possible he conjectures must have been done. He never measures the actions and powers of others by what himself is able to perform, nor makes a proper estimate of the greatness of his fellows by bringing it to the standard of his own incapacity. He is satisfied to be one of a country where mighty things have been, and imagines the fancied power of others reflects a lustre on himself. Thus, by degrees, he loses the idea of his own insignificance in a confused notion of the extraordinary powers of humanity, and is willing to grant extraordinary gifts to every pretender, because unacquainted with their claims.

This is the reason why demi-gods and heroes have ever been erected in times or countries of ignorance and barbarity; they addressed a people who had high opinions of human nature, because they were ignorant how far it could extend; they addressed a people who were willing to allow that men should be gods, because they were yet imperfectly acquainted with God and with man. These impostors knew that all men are naturally fond of seeing something very great made from the little materials of humanity; that ignorant nations are not more proud of building a tower to reach heaven, or a pyramid to last for ages, than of raising up a demi-god of their own country and creation. The same pride that erects a colossus or a pyramid installs a god or a hero; but though the adoring savage can raise his colossus to the clouds, he can exalt the hero not one inch above the standard of humanity; incapable, therefore, of exalting the idol, he debases himself, and falls prostrate before him.

When man has thus acquired an erroneous idea of the dig-

nity of his species, he and the gods become perfectly intimate; men are but angels, angels are but men, nay, but servants, that stand in waiting to execute human commands. The Persians, for instance, thus address their prophet Haly: "I salute thee, glorious creator, of whom the sun is but the shadow! Masterpiece of the Lord of human creatures! Great star of justice and religion! The sea is not rich and liberal but by the gifts of thy munificent hands. The angel treasurer of heaven reaps his harvest in the fertile gardens of the purity of thy nature. The *primum mobile* would never dart the ball of the sun through the trunk of heaven, were it not to serve the Morning, out of the extreme love she has for thee. The angel Gabriel, messenger of truth, every day kisses the groundsel of thy gate. Were there a place more exalted than the most high throne of God, I would affirm it to be thy place, O master of the faithful! Gabriel, with all his art and knowledge, is but a mere scholar to thee!"[1] Thus, my friend, men think proper to treat angels; but if, indeed, there be such an order of beings, with what a degree of satirical contempt must they listen to the songs of little mortals, thus flattering each other! thus to see creatures, wiser, indeed, than the monkey and more active than the oyster, claiming to themselves a mastery of heaven! minims, the tenants of an atom, thus arrogating a partnership in the creation of universal nature! Sure Heaven is kind, that launches no thunder at those guilty heads! But it is kind, and regards their follies with pity, nor will destroy creatures that it loved into being.

But, whatever success this practice of making demi-gods might have been attended with in barbarous nations, I do not know that any man became a god in a country where the inhabitants were refined. Such countries generally have too close an inspection into human weakness to think it invested with celestial power. They sometimes, indeed, admit the gods of strangers, or of their ancestors, which had their existence in times of obscurity; their weakness being forgotten,

[1] Chardin's "Travels," p. 402.—GOLDSMITH.

while nothing but their power and their miracles were remembered. The Chinese, for instance, never had a god of their own country: the idols which the vulgar worship at this day were brought from the barbarous nations around them. The Roman emperors, who pretended to divinity, were generally taught by a poniard that they were mortal; and Alexander, though he passed among barbarous countries for a real god, could never persuade his polite countrymen into a similitude of thinking. The Lacedemonians shrewdly complied with his commands by the following sarcastic edict: Εἰ Ἀλέξανδρος βουλέται εἶναι Θεός, Θεὸς ἔστω. Adieu.

LETTER CXVI.

WHETHER LOVE BE A NATURAL OR FICTITIOUS PASSION.

To the Same.

THERE is something irresistibly pleasing in the conversation of a fine woman: even though her tongue be silent, the eloquence of her eyes teaches wisdom. The mind sympathizes with the regularity of the object in view, and, struck with external grace, vibrates into respondent harmony. In this agreeable disposition I lately found myself in company with my friend and his niece. Our conversation turned upon love, which she seemed equally capable of defending and inspiring. We were each of different opinions upon this subject: the lady insisted that it was a natural and universal passion, and produced the happiness of those who cultivated it with proper precaution. My friend denied it to be the work of nature, but allowed it to have a real existence, and affirmed that it was of infinite service in refining society; while I, to keep up the dispute, affirmed it to be merely a name, first used by the cunning part of the fair sex, and admitted by the silly part of ours; therefore no way more natural than taking snuff or chewing opium.

"How is it possible," cried I, "that such a passion can be natural, when our opinions, even of beauty, which inspires it,

are entirely the result of fashion and caprice? The ancients, who pretended to be connoisseurs in the art, have praised narrow foreheads, red hair, and eyebrows that joined each other over the nose. Such were the charms that once captivated Catullus, Ovid, and Anacreon. Ladies would at present be out of humor, if their lovers praised them for such graces; and should an antique beauty now revive, her face would certainly be put under the discipline of the tweezer, forehead-cloth, and lead-comb, before it could be seen in public company.

"But the difference between the ancients and moderns is not so great as between the different countries of the present world. A lover of Gongora, for instance, sighs for thick lips; a Chinese lover is poetical in praise of thin. In Circassia a straight nose is thought most consistent with beauty; cross but a mountain which separates it from the Tartars, and there flat noses, tawny skins, and eyes three inches asunder, are all the fashion. In Persia, and some other countries, a man, when he marries, chooses to have his bride a maid. In the Philippine Islands, if a bridegroom happens to perceive, on the first night, that he is put off with a virgin, the marriage is declared void to all intents and purposes, and the bride sent back with disgrace. In some parts of the East a woman of beauty, properly fed up for sale, often amounts to one hundred crowns; in the kingdom of Loango ladies of the very best fashion are sold for a pig; queens, however, sell better, and sometimes amount to a cow. In short, turn even to England, do not I there see the beautiful part of the sex neglected; and none marrying or making love but old men and old women that have saved money? Do not I see beauty, from fifteen to twenty-one, rendered null and void to all intents and purposes; and those six precious years of womanhood put under a statute of virginity? What! shall I call that rancid passion love which passes between an old bachelor of fifty-six and a widow-lady of forty-nine? Never! never! What advantage is society to reap from an intercourse where the big belly is oftenest on the man's side? Would any persuade me that such a passion was natural, unless the human race were

more fit for love as they approached the decline, and, like silk-worms, became breeders just before they expired?"

"Whether love be natural or no," replied my friend, gravely, "it contributes to the happiness of every society into which it is introduced. All our pleasures are short, and can only charm at intervals; love is a method of protracting our greatest pleasure; and surely that gamester who plays the greatest stake to the best advantage will, at the end of life, rise victorious. This was the opinion of Vanini,[1] who affirmed that 'every hour was lost which was not spent in love.' His accusers were unable to comprehend his meaning, and the poor advocate for love was burnt in flames, alas! no way metaphorical. But whatever advantages the individual may reap from this passion, society will certainly be refined and improved by its introduction: all laws calculated to discourage it tend to imbrute the species and weaken the state. Though it cannot plant morals in the human breast, it cultivates them when there: pity, generosity, and honor receive a brighter polish from its assistance; and a single amour is sufficient entirely to brush off the clown."

"But it is an exotic of the most delicate constitution: it requires the greatest art to introduce it into a state, and the smallest discouragement is sufficient to repress it again. Let us only consider with what ease it was formerly extinguished in Rome, and with what difficulty it was lately revived in Europe: it seemed to sleep for ages, and at last fought its way among us through tilts, tournaments, dragons, and all the dreams of chivalry. The rest of the world, China only excepted, are, and have ever been, utter strangers to its delights and advantages. In other countries, as men find themselves stronger than women, they lay a claim to a rigorous superiority: this is natural, and love, which gives up this natural advantage, must certainly be the effect of art—an art calculated to lengthen out our happier moments, and add new graces to society."

[1] A priest, born 1585, at Tourosano, in the kingdom of Naples, died 1619. After preaching atheism in England, Germany, and Holland, he was apprehended at Toulouse and condemned to the flames.

"I entirely acquiesce in your sentiments," says the lady, "with regard to the advantages of this passion, but cannot avoid giving it a nobler origin than you have been pleased to assign. I must think that those countries where it is rejected are obliged to have recourse to art, to stifle so natural a production, and those nations where it is cultivated only make nearer advances to nature. The same efforts that are used in some places to suppress pity, and other natural passions, may have been employed to extinguish love. No nation, however unpolished, is remarkable for innocence that is not famous for passion; it has flourished in the coldest as well as the warmest regions. Even in the sultry wilds of Southern America the lover is not satisfied with possessing his mistress's person, without having her mind:

"'In all my Enna's beauties blest,
Amidst profusion still I pine;
For though she gives me up her breast,
Its panting tenant is not mine.'"[1]

"But the effects of love are too violent to be the result of an artificial passion. Nor is it in the power of fashion to force the constitution in those changes which we every day observe. Several have died of it. Few lovers are unacquainted with the fate of the two Italian lovers, Da Corsin and Julia Bellamano, who, after a long separation, expired with pleasure in each other's arms. Such instances are too strong confirmations of the reality of the passion, and serve to show that suppressing it is but opposing the natural dictates of the heart." Adieu.

[1] Translation of a South American ode.—GOLDSMITH.

LETTER CXVII.

A CITY NIGHT-PIECE.[1]

To the Same.

THE clock just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk, where Vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.[2]

What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is heard but of the chiming clock or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten; an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence! had their victories as great, joy as just and as unbounded, and with short-sighted presumption promised themselves immortality! Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some; the sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful

[1] First printed in No. IV. of *The Bee*, with the following motto:

"Ille dolet verè, qui sine teste dolet."—MART.

[2] See Vol. I. p. 164, Vol. V. p. 72, and Vol. VI. p. 206.

ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

"Here," he cries, "stood their citadel, now grown over with weeds; there, their senate-house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen; for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of the state were conferred on amusing and not on useful members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who, though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction."

How few appear in those streets which, but some few hours ago, were crowded! and those who appear now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness rather excites horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease: the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay, luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse but will not relieve them.[1]

[1] "Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head."—*The Deserted Village.*

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasinesses of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance.[1] Adieu.

LETTER CXVIII.

ON THE MEANNESS OF THE DUTCH AT THE COURT OF JAPAN.

From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi, the discontented Wanderer, by the Way of Moscow, etc.

I HAVE been just sent upon an embassy to Japan. My commission is to be despatched in four days, and you can hardly conceive the pleasure I shall find upon revisiting my native country. I shall leave with joy this proud, barbarous, inhospitable region, where every object conspires to diminish my satisfaction and increase my patriotism.

[1] The following paragraph, with which (in *The Bee*) the paper originally concluded, had, probably, some personal allusion:

"But let me turn from a scene of such distress to the sanctified hypocrite, *who has been talking of virtue till the time of bed*, and now steals out, to give a loose to his vices, under the protection of midnight; vices more atrocious, because he attempts to conceal them. See how he pants down the dark alley, and, with hastening steps, fears an acquaintance in every face. He has passed the whole day in company he hates, and now goes to prolong the night among company that as heartily hate him. May his vices be detected; may the morning rise upon his shame! Yet I wish to no purpose; villany, when detected, never gives up, but boldly adds impudence to imposture."

But though I find the inhabitants savage, yet the Dutch merchants who are permitted to trade hither seem still more detestable. They have raised my dislike to Europe in general; by them I learn how low avarice can degrade human nature; how many indignities a European will suffer for gain.

I was present at an audience given by the emperor to the Dutch envoy, who had sent several presents to all the courtiers some days previous to his admission; but he was obliged to attend those designed for the emperor himself. From the accounts I had heard of this ceremony my curiosity prompted me to be a spectator of the whole.

First went the presents, set out on beautiful enamelled tables, adorned with flowers, borne on men's shoulders, and followed by Japanese music and dancers. From so great respect paid to the gifts themselves, I had fancied the donors must have received almost divine honors. But, about a quarter of an hour after the presents had been carried in triumph, the envoy and his train were brought forward. They were covered from head to foot with long black veils, which prevented their seeing, each led by a conductor, chosen from the meanest of the people. In this dishonorable manner, having traversed the city of Jeddo, they at length arrived at the palace gate, and, after waiting half an hour, were admitted into the guard-room. Here their eyes were uncovered, and in about an hour the gentleman-usher introduced them into the Hall of Audience.[1] The emperor was at length shown, sitting in a kind of alcove at the upper end of the room, and the Dutch envoy was conducted toward the throne.

As soon as he had approached within a certain distance the gentleman-usher cried out with a loud voice, "Holanda Capitan!" Upon these words the envoy fell flat upon the ground, and crept upon his hands and feet toward the throne. Still approaching, he reared himself upon his knees and then bowed his forehead to the ground. These ceremonies being over,

[1] "Otherwise, the Hall of a Hundred Mats."—KÆMPFER, *History of Japan*, vol. ii. p. 531.

ferers: they have at once the comfort of admiration and pity.

Yet where is the magnanimity of bearing misfortunes when the whole world is looking on? Men in such circumstances can act bravely, even from motives of vanity. He only who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity, who, without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his distresses, can behave with tranquillity and indifference, is truly great: whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

The miseries of the poor are, however, entirely disregarded, though some undergo more real hardships in one day than the great in their whole lives. It is, indeed, inconceivable what difficulties the meanest English sailor or soldier endures without murmuring or regret. Every day is to him a day of misery, and yet he bears his hard fate without repining.

With what indignation do I hear the heroes of tragedy[1] complain of misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity is founded in arrogance and pride! Their severest distresses are pleasures, compared to what many of the adventuring poor every day sustain without murmuring. These may eat, drink, and sleep; have slaves to attend them, and are sure of subsistence for life; while many of their fellow-creatures are obliged to wander, without a friend to comfort or to assist them, find enmity in every law, and are too poor to obtain even justice.

I have been led into these reflections from accidentally meeting, some days ago, a poor fellow begging at one of the outlets of this town with a wooden leg. I was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation; and, after giving him what I thought proper, desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier,

[1] "With what indignation do I hear an Ovid, a Cicero, or a Rabutin complain of their misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity was that of being unable to visit a certain spot of earth, to which they had foolishly attached an idea of happiness."—*Essays*, 12mo., 1765, p. 215.

for such he was, with an intrepidity truly British, leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history as follows:

"As for misfortunes, sir, I cannot pretend to have gone through more than others. Except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don't know any reason, thank Heaven, that I have to complain: there are some who have lost both legs and an eye; but, thank Heaven, it is not quite so bad with me.

"My father was a laborer in the country, and died when I was five years old; so I was put upon the parish. As he had been a wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were not able to tell to what parish I belonged, or where I was born; so they sent me to another parish, and that parish sent me to a third; till at last it was thought I belonged to no parish at all. At length, however, they fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scholar, and had actually learned my letters; but the master of the workhouse put me to business as soon as I was able to handle a mallet.

"Here I lived an easy kind of a life for five years. I only wrought ten hours in the day, and had my meat and drink provided for my labor. It is true, I was not suffered to stir far from the house, for fear I should run away; but what of that? I had the liberty of the whole house, and the yard before the door, and that was enough for me.

"I was next bound out to a farmer, where I was up both early and late, but I ate and drank well, and liked my business well enough, till he died. Being then obliged to provide for myself, I was resolved to go and seek my fortune. Thus I lived, and went from town to town, working when I could get employment, and starving when I could get none, and might have lived so still; but happening one day to go through a field belonging to a magistrate, I spied a hare crossing the path just before me. I believe the devil put it in my head to fling my stick at it: well! what will you have on't? I killed the hare, and was bringing it away in triumph, when the justice himself met me: he called me a villain, and, collaring me, desired I would give an account of myself. I began imme-

and knocked them down. From thence nine of us ran together to the quay, and seizing the first boat we met, got out of the harbor, and put to sea. We had not been here three days before we were taken up by an English privateer, who was glad of so many good hands; and we consented to run our chance. However, we had not so much luck as we expected. In three days we fell in with a French man-of-war, of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three; so to it we went. The fight lasted for three hours; and I verily believe that we should have taken the Frenchman, but unfortunately we lost almost all our men just as we were going to get the victory. I was once more in the power of the French, and I believe it would have gone hard with me had I been brought back to my old jail in Brest; but, by good-fortune, we were retaken, and carried to England once more.

"I had almost forgotten to tell you that in this last engagement I was wounded in two places: I lost four fingers of the left hand, and my leg was shot off. Had I had the good fortune to have lost my leg and use of my hand on board a king's ship and not a privateer, I should have been entitled to cloathing and maintenance during the rest of my life; but that was not my chance: one man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle. However, blessed be God! I enjoy good health, and have no enemy in this world, that I know of, but the French and the justice of peace."

Thus saying, he limped off, leaving my friend and me in admiration of his intrepidity and content; nor could we avoid acknowledging that an habitual acquaintance with misery is the truest school of fortitude and philosophy. Adieu.

LETTER CXX.

ON THE ABSURDITY OF SOME LATE ENGLISH TITLES.

From the Same.

THE titles of European princes are rather more numerous than ours of Asia, but by no means so sublime. The King of Visapour, or Pegu, not satisfied with claiming the globe and all its appurtenances to him and his heirs, asserts a property even in the firmament, and extends his orders to the milky-way. The monarchs of Europe, with more modesty, confine their titles to earth, but make up by number what is wanting in their sublimity. Such is their passion for a long list of these splendid trifles, that I have known a German prince with more titles than subjects, and a Spanish nobleman with more names than shirts.

Contrary to this, "the English monarchs," says a writer of the last century, "disdain to accept of such titles, which tend only to increase their pride without improving their glory; they are above depending on the feeble helps of heraldry for respect, perfectly satisfied with the consciousness of acknowledged power." At present, however, these maxims are laid aside: the English monarchs have of late assumed new titles, and have impressed their coins with the names and arms of obscure dukedoms, petty states, and subordinate employments. Their design in this, I make no doubt, was laudably to add new lustre to the British throne; but, in reality, paltry claims only serve to diminish that respect they are designed to secure.

There is in the honors assumed by kings, as in the decorations of architecture, a majestic simplicity, which best conduces to inspire our reverence and respect: numerous and trifling ornaments in either are strong indications of meanness in the designer, or of concealed deformity. Should, for instance, the Emperor of China, among other titles, assume

that of Deputy Mandarin of Maccau, or the Monarch of Great Britain, France, and Ireland desire to be acknowledged as Duke of Brentford, Lunenburg, or Lincoln, the observer revolts at this mixture of important and paltry claims, and forgets the emperor in his familiarity with the duke or the deputy.

I remember a similar instance of this inverted ambition in the illustrious King of Manacabo, upon his first treaty with the Portuguese. Among the presents that were made him by the ambassador of that nation was a sword, with a brass hilt, which he seemed to set a peculiar value upon. This he thought too great an acquisition to his glory to be forgotten among the number of his titles. He therefore gave orders that his subjects should style him, for the future, "Talipot, the immortal Potentate of Manacabo, Messenger of the Morning, Enlightener of the Sun, Possessor of the whole Earth, and mighty Monarch of the brass-handled Sword."

This method of mixing majestic and paltry titles, of quartering the arms of a great empire and an obscure province upon the same medal here, had its rise in the virtuous partiality of their late monarchs. Willing to testify an affection to their native country, they gave its name and ensigns a place upon their coins, and thus in some measure ennobled its obscurity. It was, indeed, but just that a people which had given England up their king, should receive some honorary equivalent in return; but at present these motives are no more: England has now a monarch wholly British, and has some reason to hope for British titles upon British coins.

However, were the money of England designed to circulate in Germany, there would be no flagrant impropriety in impressing it with German names and arms; but though this might have been so upon former occasions, I am told there is no danger of it for the future. As England, therefore, designs to keep back its gold, I candidly think Lunenburg, Oldenburg, and the rest of them may very well keep back their titles.

It is a mistaken prejudice in princes to think that a number of loud-sounding names can give new claims to respect.

The truly great have ever disdained them. When Timur the Lame had conquered Asia, an orator by profession came to compliment him upon the occasion. He began his harangue by styling him the most omnipotent and the most glorious object of the creation. The emperor seemed displeased with his paltry adulation; yet still he went on, complimenting him as the most mighty, the most valiant, and the most perfect of beings. "Hold there, my friend," cries the late emperor; "hold there, till I have got another leg." In fact, the feeble or the despotic alone find pleasure in multiplying these pageants of vanity; but strength and freedom have nobler aims, and often find the finest adulation in majestic simplicity.

The young monarch of this country has already testified a proper contempt for several unmeaning appendages on royalty: cooks and scullions have been obliged to quit their fires; gentlemen's gentlemen, and the whole tribe of necessary people who did nothing, have been dismissed from further services. A youth who can thus bring back simplicity and frugality to a court will soon, probably, have a true respect for his own glory; and while he has dismissed all useless employments, may disdain to accept of empty or degrading titles. Adieu.

LETTER CXXI.

THE IRRESOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH ACCOUNTED FOR.

From the Same.

WHENEVER I attempt to characterize the English in general, some unforeseen difficulties constantly occur to disconcert my design; I hesitate between censure and praise. When I consider them as a reasoning, philosophical people, they have my applause; but when I reverse the medal, and observe their inconstancy and irresolution, I can scarcely persuade myself that I am observing the same people.

Yet, upon examination, this very inconstancy, so remarkable here, flows from no other source than their love of reason-

ing. The man who examines a complicated subject on every side, and calls in reason to his assistance, will frequently change; will find himself distracted by opposing probabilities and contending proofs: every alteration of place will diversify the prospect, will give some latent argument new force, and contribute to maintain an anarchy in the mind.

On the contrary, they who never examine with their own reason act with more simplicity. Ignorance is positive, instinct perseveres, and the human being moves in safety, within the narrow circle of brutal uniformity. What is true with regard to individuals is not less so when applied to states. A reasoning government like this is in continual fluctuation, while those kingdoms where men are taught, not to controvert, but obey, continue always the same. In Asia, for instance, where the monarch's authority is supported by force and acknowledged through fear, a change of government is entirely unknown. All the inhabitants seem to wear the same mental complexion, and remain contented with hereditary oppression. The sovereign's pleasure is the ultimate rule of duty; every branch of the administration is a perfect epitome of the whole; and if one tyrant is deposed, another starts up in his room, to govern as his predecessor. The English, on the contrary, instead of being led by power, endeavor to guide themselves by reason; instead of appealing to the pleasure of the prince, appeal to the original rights of mankind. What one rank of men assert is denied by others, as the reasons on opposite sides happen to come home with greater or less conviction. The people of Asia are directed by precedent, which never alters; the English by reason, which is ever changing its appearance.

The disadvantages of an Asiatic government, acting in this manner by precedent, are evident: original errors are thus continued without hopes of redress, and all marks of genius are levelled down to one standard, since no superiority of thinking can be allowed its exertion in mending obvious defects. But to recompense those defects their governments undergo no new alterations; they have no new evils to fear, nor no fermentations in the constitution that continue; the

struggle for power is soon over, and all becomes tranquil as before; they are habituated to subordination, and men are taught to form no other desires than those which they are allowed to satisfy.

The disadvantages of a government acting from the immediate influence of reason, like that of England, are not less than those of the former. It is extremely difficult to induce a number of free beings to co-operate for their mutual benefit; every possible advantage will necessarily be sought, and every attempt to procure it must be attended with a new fermentation; various reasons will lead different ways, and equity and advantage will often be balanced by a combination of clamor and prejudice. But though such a people may be thus in the wrong, they have been influenced by a happy delusion; their errors are seldom seen till they are felt; each man is himself the tyrant he has obeyed, and such a master he can easily forgive. The disadvantages he feels may, in reality, be equal to what is felt in the most despotic government; but man will bear every calamity with patience when he knows himself to be the author of his own misfortunes. Adieu.

LETTER CXXII.

THE MANNER OF TRAVELLERS IN THEIR USUAL RELATIONS RIDICULED.

From the Same.

My long residence here begins to fatigue me. As every object ceases to be new, it no longer continues to be pleasing; some minds are so fond of variety that pleasure itself, if permanent, would be insupportable, and we are thus obliged to solicit new happiness even by courting distress. I only, therefore, wait the arrival of my son to vary this trifling scene, and borrow new pleasure from danger and fatigue. A life, I own, thus spent in wandering from place to place is at best but empty dissipation. But to pursue trifles is the lot of humanity; and whether we bustle in a pantomime or strut at a cor-

onation, whether we shout at a bonfire or harangue at a senate-house, whatever object we follow, it will at last surely conduct us to futility and disappointment. The wise bustle and laugh as they walk in the pageant, but fools bustle and are important; and this probably is all the difference between them.

This may be an apology for the levity of my former correspondence; I talked of trifles, and I knew that they were trifles: to make the things of this life ridiculous it is only sufficient to call them by their names.

In other respects, I have omitted several striking circumstances in the description of this country, as supposing them either already known to you, or as not being thoroughly known to myself; but there is one omission, for which I expect no forgiveness, namely, my being totally silent upon their buildings, roads, rivers, and mountains. This is a branch of science on which all other travellers are so very prolix that my deficiency will appear the more glaring. With what pleasure, for instance, do some read of a traveller in Egypt measuring a fallen column with his cane, and finding it exactly five feet nine inches long; of his creeping through the mouth of a catacomb, and coming out by a different hole from that he entered; of his stealing the finger of an antique statue in spite of the janizary that watched him; or his adding a new conjecture to the hundred and fourteen conjectures already published upon the names of Osiris and Isis.

Methinks I hear some of my friends in China demanding a similar account of London and the adjacent villages; and if I remain here much longer it is probable I may gratify their curiosity. I intend, when run dry on other topics, to take a serious survey of the City Wall, to describe that beautiful building, the Mansion House; I will enumerate the magnificent squares in which the nobility chiefly reside, and the royal palaces appointed for the reception of the English monarch; nor will I forget the beauties of Shoe Lane, in which I myself have resided since my arrival. You shall find me in no way inferior to many of my brother travellers in the arts of description. At present, however, as a specimen of this way

of writing I send you a few hasty remarks, collected in a late journey I made to Kentish Town[1]—and this in the manner of modern voyagers:

"Having heard much of Kentish Town, I conceived a strong desire to see that celebrated place. I could have wished, indeed, to satisfy my curiosity without going thither; but that was impracticable, and therefore I resolved to go. Travellers have two methods of going to Kentish Town: they take coach, which costs ninepence, or they may go afoot, which costs nothing; in my opinion a coach is by far the most eligible convenience; but I was resolved to go on foot, having considered with myself that going in that manner would be the cheapest way.

"As you set out from Dog House Bar[2] you enter upon a fine level road, railed in on both sides, commanding on the right a small prospect of groves and fields enamelled with flowers, which would wonderfully charm the sense of smelling were it not for a dunghill on the left, which mixes its effluvia with their odors. This dunghill is of much greater antiquity than the road; and I must not omit a piece of injustice I was going to commit upon this occasion. My indignation was levelled against the makers of the dunghill, for having brought it so near the road; whereas, it should have fallen upon the makers of the road, for having brought that so near the dunghill.

"After proceeding in this manner for some time, a building resembling somewhat a triumphal arch salutes the traveller's view. This structure, however, is peculiar to this country, and vulgarly called a turnpike-gate; I could perceive a long inscription in large characters on the front, probably upon the occasion of some triumph, but, being in haste, I left it to

[1] A hamlet and prebendal manor of St. Paul's, north-west of St. Pancras, and written in Court-rolls of the 14th century as Kaunteloe or De Kaunteloe. The lease passed in 1670 into the hands of the Jeffreys family, and subsequently, by marriage, to the first Earl Camden, in whose family it still remains. Kentish Town is now (1854) part of modern London.

[2] Dog House Bar stood across the City Road, where Old Street and Old Street Road now unite. It is marked in the maps of London engraved in the reign of George II.

be made out by some subsequent adventurer who may happen to travel this way; so, continuing my course to the west, I soon arrived at an unwalled town called Islington.[1]

"Islington is a pretty, neat town, mostly built of brick, with a church and bells; it has a small lake, or rather pond,[2] in the midst, though at present very much neglected. I am told it is dry in summer; if this be the case, it can be no very proper receptacle for fish, of which the inhabitants themselves seem sensible, by bringing all that is eaten there from London.

"After having surveyed the curiosities of this fair and beautiful town, I proceeded forward, leaving a fair stone building, called the White Conduit House,[3] on my right. Here the inhabitants of London often assemble to celebrate a feast of hot rolls and butter: seeing such numbers, each with their little tables before them, employed on this occasion, must, no doubt, be a very amusing sight to the looker-on, but still more so to those who perform in the solemnity.

"From hence I parted with reluctance to *Pancras*,[4] as it is

[1] "The monster London" of Cowley's poem upon "Solitude:"

"Let but thy wicked men from out thee go,
And all the fools that crowd thee so,
Even thou, who dost thy millions boast,
A village less than Islington wilt grow,
A solitude almost."

[2] "*Master Stephen.* What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury or the citizens that come ducking to Islington Ponds."—BEN JONSON, *Every Man in his Humor.*

"27*th March*, 1664.—Walked through the Ducking Pond Fields; but they are so altered since my father used to carry us to Islington, to the old man's, at the King's Head, to eat cakes and ale (his name was Pitts), that I did not know which was the Ducking Pond (*see* Ball's Pond), nor where I was."—PEPYS.

[3] A kind of minor Vauxhall, for Londoners who went for cakes and cream to Islington. The gardens lost their rank and reputation early in the present century; and the house, before it was pulled down (January, 1849) to make way for a new street, was nothing more than a large tavern, with a large room for suburban entertainments and political meetings. — See *The Bee*, No. II., and art. "White Conduit House," in CUNNINGHAM'S *Hand-book of London*, ed. 1850, p. 547.

[4] "Pancras Church standeth all alone, as utterly forsaken, old and weather-beaten, which, for the antiquity thereof, is thought not to yield to Paul's in London. About this church have bin many buildings now decayed, leaving poor

written, or *Pancridge*, as it is pronounced; but which should be both pronounced and written *Pangrace:* this emendation I will venture *meo arbitrio;* Παν, in the Greek language, signifies *all*, which, added to the English word *grace*, maketh *all grace*, or *Pangrace;* and, indeed, this is a very proper appellation to a place of so much sanctity as Pangrace is universally esteemed. However this be, if you except the parish church and its fine bells, there is little in Pangrace worth the attention of the curious observer.

"From Pangrace to Kentish Town is an easy journey of one mile and a quarter: the road lies through a fine champaign country, well watered with beautiful drains, and enamelled with flowers of all kinds, which might contribute to charm every sense, were it not that the odoriferous gales are often more impregnated with dust than perfume.

"As you enter Kentish Town the eye is at once presented with the shops of artificers, such as venders of candles, small-coal, and hair-brooms; there are also several august buildings of red brick, with numberless sign-posts, or rather pillars, in a peculiar order of architecture; I send you a drawing of several, *vide* A, B, C. This pretty town probably borrows its name from its vicinity to the county of Kent; and, indeed, it is not unnatural that it should, as there are only London and the adjacent villages that lie between them. Be this as it will, perceiving night approach, I made a hasty repast on roasted mutton and a certain dried fruit called potatoes, resolving to protract my remarks upon my return; and this I would very willingly have done, but was prevented by a circumstance which, in truth, I had for some time foreseen; for, night coming on, it was impossible to take a proper survey of the country, as I was obliged to return home in the dark." Adieu.

Pancras without companie or comfort, yet it is now and then visited with Kentish-towne and Highgate, which are members thereof; but they seldom come there, for they have chapels of ease within themselves; but when there is a corpse to be interred, they are forced to leave the same within this forsaken church or churchyard, where (no doubt) it resteth as secure against the day of resurrection as if it laie in stately Paule's."—NORDEN, *Spec. Brit.*, 4to, 1593.

herself) began to cut it up, by first taking off the leg. "Madam," cried my friend, "if I might be permitted to advise, I would begin by cutting off the wing, and then the leg will come off more easily." "Sir," replies the widow, "give me leave to understand cutting up a fowl; I always begin with the leg." "Yes, madam," replies the lover, "but if the wing be the most convenient manner, I would begin with the wing." "Sir," interrupts the lady, "when you have fowls of your own, begin with the wing, if you please; but give me leave to take off the leg: I hope I am not to be taught at this time of day!" "Madam," interrupts he, "we are never too old to be instructed." "Old, sir!" interrupts the other, "who is old, sir? When I die of age, I know of some that will quake for fear: if the leg does not come off, take the turkey to yourself." "Madam," replied the man in black, "I don't care a farthing whether the leg or the wing comes off; if you are for the leg first, why, you shall have the argument, even though it be as I say." "As for the matter of that," cries the widow, "I don't care a fig, whether you are for the leg off or on; and, friend, for the future keep your distance!" "Oh," replied the other, "that is easily done; it is only removing to the other end of the table; and so, madam, your most obedient, humble servant."

Thus was this courtship of an age destroyed in one moment; for this dialogue effectually broke off the match between this respectable couple that had been just concluded. The smallest accidents disappoint the most important treaties; however, though it in some measure interrupted the general satisfaction, it no ways lessened the happiness of the youthful couple; and by the young lady's looks I could perceive she was not entirely displeased with this interruption.

In a few hours the whole transaction seemed entirely forgotten, and we have all since enjoyed those satisfactions which result from a consciousness of making each other happy. My son and his fair partner are fixed here for life; the man in black has given them up a small estate in the country, which, added to what I was able to bestow, will be capable of supplying all the real, but not the fictitious, demands of hap-

piness. As for myself, the world being but one city to me, I do not much care in which of the streets I happen to reside. I shall therefore spend the remainder of my days in examining the manners of different countries, and have prevailed upon the man in black to be my companion. "They must often change," says Confucius, "who would be constant in happiness or wisdom." Adieu.

END OF VOL. IV.

